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Scene magazine

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\$1.00

Staying together while far apart

Army programs
aim at keeping
marriages
strong through
the strain of
deployments

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Chaplains with the 173rd Airborne Brigade have instituted counseling programs to help servicemembers and their spouses keep their commitments to each other strong during — and after — deployments.

File photo

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MORGAN LOOSLI/Stars and Stripes



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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Washington gubernatorial vote: More than two months after Washington voters cast their ballots, Republican Dino Rossi is hoping the courts will give them another chance to pick their next governor.

Rossi and the state GOP announced Friday they will contest the gubernatorial election that gave Rossi's Democratic foe, Christine Gregoire, a 128-vote victory.

Republicans filed a lawsuit contesting the election in Chelan County, in north-central Washington. GOP attorney Harry Korrell said Republicans would not seek to block Gregoire's inauguration, scheduled for Wednesday. Democrats said the state constitution won't allow a revote.

Death penalty lawsuit: A confessed serial killer set to become the first inmate executed in New England in 40 years urged a federal judge Friday to dismiss efforts by the inmate's father and a civil liberties group to spare his life.

"I don't need anyone filing on my behalf," Michael Ross told Judge Christopher Droney via closed circuit television from Osborn Correctional Institution in Somers, Conn. "I can file my own lawsuits if I wish."

The Connecticut Civil Liberties Union and Ross' father, Dan, argue Connecticut's method of lethal injection amounts to cruel and unusual punishment, and violates international treaties on torture and civil rights.

Peterson murders: The five people who are sharing a \$50,000 reward for finding the bodies of Laci Peterson and her fetus have chosen to stay out of the spotlight, but Laci Peterson's mother nonetheless offered them her gratitude Friday.

"You could have chosen to keep on walking," Sharon Rocha said, her voice trembling at a news conference where the Carole Sund/Carrington Foundation formally presented the reward. "You didn't. You did the right thing. For that we will be eternally grateful."

None of the five reward recipients attended the event, according to the Modesto (Calif.) Bee. But Rocha said their grisly discoveries along the shore of San Francisco Bay nearly two years ago brought a measure of peace and closure to her family.

Scott Peterson, 32, Laci Peterson's husband, was convicted in November of murdering his pregnant wife and dumping her body in San Francisco Bay as he pretended to fish alone on Christmas Eve 2002.

Triplet custody battle: A judge on Friday awarded final legal custody to a surrogate mother in Erie, Pa., who gave birth to triplets and then refused to give them up, saying the biological father and his fiancée showed a lack of interest.

In his ruling, Erie County Judge Shad Connolly said Danielle Bimber, 30, "is the better caretaker by far."

Connolly had already named Bimber the legal mother of the three boys, who were born Nov. 19, 2003, and granted her temporary primary custody last year.

Clergy sex abuse: The Archdiocese of Portland, Ore., has begun running ads in major U.S. newspapers alerting alleged vic-



Falun Gong protest: A Taiwanese Falun Gong practitioner is handcuffed to a prison door Saturday during a skit held outside the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in Taipei, Taiwan. About 3,000 Falun Gong members formed a human chain 4 miles long through Taipei on Saturday to protest persecution of the group's followers in China. The protesters, who demonstrated despite rain, dubbed their chain the "Great Wall of Justice." Beijing says Falun Gong is an "evil cult" that threatens to sabotage social order and has arrested thousands of followers since it outlawed the group in 1999.

tims of clergy sex abuse to a April 29 deadline to make claims in most cases.

The \$250,000 worth of ads, required as part of the church's bankruptcy proceedings, will run in 21 newspapers, including The Wall Street Journal and USA Today, over the next three weeks.

JonBenet Ramsey death: A federal judge has tossed out a lawsuit filed by the parents of JonBenet Ramsey against Fox News Channel, saying a network report unfavorable to the couple was not defamatory.

Judge Phillip Figa suggested that John and Patsy Ramsey seek vindication "in the court of public opinion."

In a ruling made public Friday, Figa said litigation in defamation cases could chill constitutionally protected free speech rights and because of that, the facts in such cases must be established with "convincing clarity."

The lawsuit was filed over a December 2002 story that aired around the six-year anniversary of the 6-year-old girl's slaying.

War on terrorism

Abu Ghraib abuse trial: A terror suspect captured by Navy SEALs in Iraq was able to walk on his own and was resisting his captors when the CIA took custody of him, according to a Navy officer who said he was the last SEAL to see the prisoner alive.

Testimony at a military hearing for a Navy SEAL lieutenant charged with assault and maltreatment indicated that Mandel al-Jamadi died a short time later in the shower room of Abu Ghraib prison while he was being interrogated by the CIA.

Friday's testimony from a NAVY SEAL

lieutenant commander who oversaw the operation to capture al-Jamadi contradicted statements about the operation by a disgraced ex-SEAL. The former SEAL has stated that the prisoner was "lifeless" when he was left at Abu Ghraib following a severe beating by the SEALs.

World

Pakistan violence: At least 11 people were killed in sectarian clashes in a northern Pakistan city on Saturday, prompting authorities to impose a curfew and summon troops to restore order, officials said.

The shooting and wounding of a prominent Shiite Muslim leader early Saturday triggered the violence between his supporters and Sunni Muslims in the Himalayan city of Gilgit, about 150 miles north of the capital, Islamabad.

Hundreds of Shiites angered by the shooting of cleric Agha Ziauddin and two of his security guards by unidentified gunmen as they traveled in a car had gone on a rampage, burning government buildings and attacking shops belonging to Sunnis, Police official Mohammed Sadaqat said.

African Union summit: African heads of state will meet in Nigeria later this month for a twice-yearly African Union summit that will focus on continent hotspots Congo, Sudan and Ivory Coast, officials said Saturday.

All 53 African Union heads of state have been invited to the Jan. 30-31 summit in the capital, Abuja, said Nigerian foreign ministry official Florentina Ukonga.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

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Army tries to help war-torn marriages

173rd to benefit with new camps and retreats

BY KENT HARRIS
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — When members of the Southern European Task Force (Airborne) head to Afghanistan in a few months, they'll be facing hostile conditions thousands of miles from their families.

But if local military leaders have their way, those soldiers won't be worrying about potentially hostile situations within their families.

"A soldier who is confident in the state of their marriage is a better soldier," says Chaplain (Maj.) David Beauchamp of the 173rd Airborne Brigade.



Beauchamp

"From a chaplain's viewpoint ... what's going to last longer, the Army career or the marriage? Hopefully the marriage is going to last longer."



Kircher

But in today's Army, where long deployments seem to be a never-ending prospect, marriages are thought to be more at risk. However, neither the 173rd — which spent a year in Iraq before returning last spring — SETAF, nor U.S. Army Europe keeps statistics on divorces to prove or disprove that theory.

Chaplain (Maj.) Leon Kircher, chaplain for the 22nd Area Support Group, which includes Vicenza, counseled some of the 173rd's couples who were having trouble during and after the deployment. He said some relationships did end in divorce.

"Not as many as I thought there could be," he said. "To say it was epidemic? No."

Both chaplains attribute that to a strong effort by the various agencies at Caserma Ederle charged with supporting families while troops are away. And both think the effort will be better for the upcoming deployment.

Chaplains will lead 300 couples — representing about a quarter of those married in the brigade — on overnight retreats at Lake Garda before the deployment. Col. Kevin Owens, the 173rd commander, allocated thousands of dollars from brigade funds to pay for the retreat. Younger enlisted



Helping couples in need

U.S. Army Europe doesn't have an overall program that specifically targets marriages during deployment.

But an array of new measures initialized while many of the Europe-based soldiers served in Iraq contain elements that could help couples in need. Counseling is available during the command's mandatory reintegration program. And block leave is designed to give families time to readjust.

Chaplains are available in each community and a dozen marriage and family therapists are spread out among the largest Army communities in Germany and Belgium.

Area support groups and individual communities are taking part in the responsibility for creating and maintaining marriage-enrichment programs, which vary by location.

— Kent Harris

soldiers and their spouses will get most of the spots.

"It's expensive," Beauchamp said. "But if we can save marriages, it's worth it."

Those participating will focus on communication, forgiveness and commitment, he said. Each partner will be given a commitment coin to carry during the deployment.

"It'll be a reminder to them that they've got responsibilities toward another person," he said. "Not only for the soldiers, but also their spouses."

In fact, Beauchamp said every married couple in the brigade would get a chance to participate in a commitment ceremony and receive a coin. Those not on the retreats can participate at the base chapel. The Protestant Women of the Chapel is sponsoring an event targeting couples Jan. 21-22 that's called "Battle Proofing Your Marriage."

During the deployment, Kircher

er said chaplains will be working on both ends to help couples in need. He said it will be possible to arrange phone sessions to counsel both partners together or separately.

The chapel plans to hold weekly gatherings for spouses with free child care so moms — and dads — can get together to eat, talk, shop or visit local sights. Kircher said he hopes the informal gatherings will give spouses a chance to share problems and solutions with one another.

The chapel also will sponsor monthly retreats for spouses during the deployment, focusing on potential problems and solutions.

"It's like tuning up a car," Kircher said. "Sometimes you don't even realize it, but something could be wrong."

In the field, Beauchamp said he'll be leading a 40-week course using the best-selling inspirational book, "Purpose Driven Life." Kircher will be sending out com-

munity messages to the community, so those on both sides can follow along.

After the deployment, couples can participate in the Army's "Building Strong and Ready Families" program. Dozens participated after the last deployment, Beauchamp said. And the chaplains hope there will be more opportunities this time if there's a need.

Kircher said commanders realize that helping soldiers keep good relationships with their spouses has become a key part of the deployment process.

"One thing that weighs on a soldier's mind is if their family is being taken care of," he said. "When they're out on a patrol or inspecting something, you don't want that to be the first thing on their minds. They've got to be focused on the job at hand."

E-mail Kent Harris at harris@mail.esd.army.mil

\$2 million never spent on spouse programs

BY KIMBERLY HEFLING
The Associated Press

HOPKINSVILLE, Ky. — With studies showing divorce rates as high as 21 percent among couples where one spouse has been sent off to war, the Army is spending \$2 million on a variety of marriage programs, including vouchers for romantic getaways to places like the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tenn.

When Sgt. Jose Bermudez returned from Iraq early this year, he came home to a new baby and a troubled marriage. "We were on the brink of divorce," Mandy Bermudez acknowledged as the couple ate lunch recently with their three children, all under age 3.

Lt. Col. Chester Egert
chaplain for the Fort Campbell-based 101st Airborne Division

The Bermudezes were among 300 couples for the Fort Campbell-based 101st Airborne Division who have attended "marriage enrichment" seminars put on by the Army in hopes of saving war-ravaged relationships.

"I've been in the Army 20 years, and I've never seen the Army pay for programs like this," said Lt. Col. Chester Egert, chaplain for the 101st.

One program being implemented Army-wide teaches couples forgiveness and the skills to communicate.

It includes a 40-hour course with lessons on the dangers of alcohol and tobacco and how to recognize post-traumatic stress.

Soldiers who complete it are rewarded with promotion points and a weekend retreat with their spouse.

"If you learn those skills, you can make an impact on the number of divorces, and the number, we think, of reports of physical violence," said Col. Gen. Bloomstrom, director of ministry initiatives for the Chief of Chaplains.

Deadline nearing to file application for scholarships

Stars and Stripes

Feb. 16 is the deadline to submit applications for the Scholarships for Military Children program, supported by the Defense Commissary Agency.

Applications for the \$1,500 scholarships must be delivered by mail or hand to any of the 275 commissaries worldwide by close of business Feb. 16, according to a DECA news release. At least one scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants.

The program is in its fifth year and has awarded nearly 3,000 scholarships worth more than \$3.2 million.

Applications can be downloaded through a link at www.commissaries.com, or from www.militaryscholar.org. It can be filled out by hand or on the computer. Applications also are available at commissaries.

The program is open to unmarried children under the age of 21 (23 if enrolled in school) of active-duty personnel, including Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserves, and retired military. Eligibility will be determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database. Ap-

plicants must ensure that they and their sponsor are enrolled in DEERS and have current ID cards.

Applicants must be planning to attend, or already attending, an accredited college or university full time in the 2005 fall term, or be enrolled in a program designed to transfer directly into a four-year program.

DECA program liaison Edna Hoggswold advised applicants to pay special attention to the essay portion of the application.

"In past years, the essay has been a key factor in deciding among the many outstanding applicants," she said.

Fisher House Foundation, a nonprofit organization that builds rooms for families to use overnight near military medical facilities, administers the program, and Scholarship Managers, a professional firm that has handled more than 400 programs, screens applicants and awards scholarships. Neither Fisher House nor DECA is involved in the decision process.

Scholarships are primarily funded through the donations by various manufacturers, brokers and suppliers that sell products in commissaries.

Proud moment



Teresa Tucker assists in the promotion of her husband, Brig. Gen. Michael Tucker, the 1st Armored Division's assistant division commander for maneuver, during a ceremony Friday at Wiesbaden Army Airfield, Germany. Watching at left is Gen. B.B. Bell, commander of U.S. Army Europe and the 7th Army. Tucker joined the division in 2001, led the 1st Brigade Combat Team in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and assumed his current position at the end of his deployment.

CHRISTOPHER STANS
Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Congressman out to add Marines to Department of the Navy name

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A North Carolina congressman wants to change the Department of the Navy's name so that Marines, including those at two bases in his district, get full credit for their importance to national defense.

A bill proposed this week by Rep. Walter Jones, R-N.C., would rename the agency to "The Department of the Navy and Marine Corps." He says the change would clarify the corps' position as the fourth major defense branch, instead of implying that the Marines are somehow below the Army, Air Force and Navy.

"There isn't a subordinate relationship between the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps," Jones said. "They are equivalent parts of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and it is time

that the Department of the Navy recognizes their equal status."

Jones has brought up the issue in the last two legislative sessions, only to see the proposal stall in committee hearings before the full House of Representatives could vote on the measure.

Marine Corps officials had no comment on the legislation. Capt. Kevin Wensing, spokesman for Navy Secretary Gordon England, said the secretary has defended the issue in the past, saying that he is honored to serve no matter what the department's name is.

But Wensing said England frequently jokes that Marines he has spoken with are opposed to the new name.

"They think he should be 'Secretary of the Marine Corps and Navy,'" he said. "They want top billing."

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

E-mail Leo Shane at: shane@stripes.osd.mil

USS Stennis en route to new home in Bremerton

BY MELANATHA MITCHELL

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — As the USS Carl Vinson prepares to leave its home port in Bremerton, the USS John C. Stennis is sailing in to take its place, bringing with it thousands of sailors and their families from its former base at San Diego.

"With the Vinson leaving, they wanted to replace it with another carrier," Navy spokeswoman Chief Petty Officer Jen Robinson said, noting the Stennis is expected to remain at Naval Base Kitsap for about 10 years. Its strike group, however, will remain near

San Diego at Naval Air Station North Island.

The aircraft carrier has spent the past six years in San Diego, where it departed Wednesday for its four-day journey north to its new home at the Bremerton base, across Puget Sound from Seattle.

The Nimitz-class carrier's planned arrival Saturday is also part of a regular rotation throughout the fleet. During its first 10 months, the Stennis will be moved to a dry dock at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard for long-awaited maintenance and updates, Robinson said.

The Stennis, commanded by Capt. David H. Buss, brings with it more than 2,500 sailors, over half of whom have families who have been moving to the Kitsap Peninsula since May.

Coordinating the move of so many people during the holidays and in the midst of a school year was a challenge, said Beth Wurth, the carrier's command ombudsman, who moved in August.

"It's like moving a whole city. There's over 6,000 people involved when you move the sailors and their families," Wurth said from her new housing at Naval

Submarine Base Bangor, about 10 miles north of Bremerton.

The long stay will be a welcome reprieve for Wurth and her husband, Petty Officer 1st Class Scott Wurth, an electronics technician who works on combat systems. The couple has moved five times in the 18 months they've been married, with him gone 70 percent of the time.

"I cannot wait to see that ship come around the bend," said Wurth, who last saw her husband in November when the Stennis returned from a five-month deployment in the western Pacific. Other families have yet to be reunited.

"For many of these families, this is homecoming," she said.

The 1,992-foot Stennis recently participated in the Navy's new Fleet Response Plan. Exercises this summer had seven of the Navy's 12 carrier strike groups deployed simultaneously to test the feasibility of having multiple detachments at sea.

The USS Carl Vinson, based at Bremerton since 1973, this month begins a six-month deployment in the western Pacific. In November, the aircraft carrier and its 3,200 sailors head for Newport News, Va., for a 3½-year refueling overhaul.

Mildenhall airmen conducting exercises

Residents of Suffolk County, England, may see what looks like a new sequel to "Die Hard" around Beck Row on Monday.

But the colored smoke, troops dressed in chemical gear or running around in what looks like warfare is just an exercise of the U.S. Air Force's 352nd Special Operations Group from RAF Mildenhall. The group will conduct exercises from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. near Beck Row, Auto Breakers throughout the week.

According to an Air Force news release, the disruption to neighbors caused by the drills should be minimal. The smoke is harmless to people and animals, the military said.

Guards will be posted to control access to the training area.

Fort Benning insurance refunds

ATLANTA — A Texas-based insurance company has been ordered to refund \$1.3 million to Fort Benning, Ga., soldiers who were improperly sold life insurance policies.

American-Amicable Life Insurance Co. of Texas will refund money from premiums paid by about 900 active-duty soldiers at Fort Benning, said Georgia Insurance Commissioner John Oxendine, who ordered the refunds Friday. The policies were sold during 2002.

Refunds will include all sales of the Horizon Life policies, Oxendine said. The amounts of the refunds will depend on how much the soldiers paid.

Oxendine said the insurer broke federal and state rules against acting like disinterested financial planners while selling policies to soldiers in training.

Nuclear sub runs aground

HONOLULU — A nuclear submarine ran aground about 350 miles south of Guam, injuring several sailors, one of them critically, the Navy said.

There were no reports of damage to the USS San Francisco's reactor plant, which was operating normally, the Navy said.

Jon Yoshishige, a spokesman for the U.S. Pacific Fleet based at Pearl Harbor, said the Friday afternoon incident is under investigation and the 360-foot submarine was headed back to its home port in Guam.

Details on the sailors' injuries were not immediately available. The sub has a crew of 137 officials said. Military and Coast Guard aircraft from Guam were en route to monitor the submarine and assist if needed, the Navy said.

From staff and wire reports

U.S. soldier acquitted of manslaughter in drowning

But GI is guilty of assault in Tigris River incident

BY ANGELA K. BROWN

The Associated Press

FORT HOOD, Texas — A U.S. Army sergeant was acquitted Friday of involuntary manslaughter in the alleged drowning of an Iraqi civilian who was forced into the Tigris River by U.S. soldiers for violating curfew.

The jury, however, convicted Army Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Perkins, 33, of assault in the January 2004 incident.

Defense attorneys contended the victim may still be alive, but say if he is dead, it was not at the hands of U.S. soldiers.

The jury of Army officers and enlisted members, who deliberated 17 hours over two days, were allowed to consider lesser charges against Perkins, who has been in the military for 14 years.

Perkins and another soldier were accused of ordering soldiers to push two Iraqis into the river in Samarra. Prosecutors say Zaidoun Hassoun, 19, drowned and his cousin, Marwan Hassoun, climbed out the river.

Marwan Hassoun testified that he and his cousin were detained while driving back to Samarra with plumbing supplies, then forced at gunpoint into the river as U.S. soldiers laughed.

He said he tried to save his cousin by grabbing his hand, but the powerful current swept Zaidoun away. Marwan said the body was found in the river nearly two weeks later.

But three soldiers called by the defense testified that they were looking through night-vision equipment that night and saw Iraqis on the river bank after the incident.

Sgt. Irene Cintron, an Army investigator, testified that government officials never had Zaidoun's body exhumed for testing because of security concerns. She said she could not confirm whether the corpse shown in a video provided by the family was Zaidoun's.

Perkins was convicted of assault consummated by battery in Zaidoun's purported death, which carries a maximum sentence of

six months. He was convicted of aggravated assault in connection with Marwan Hassoun.

Perkins also was convicted of obstruction of justice and aggravated assault for ordering a soldier to throw another Iraqi man into the river in December 2003 near Balad.

The sentencing phase of the trial was scheduled to begin Saturday. Perkins' penalty ranges from no punishment to 1½ years.

Defense attorney Capt. Josh Norris said in closing arguments that the soldiers were trying to find non-lethal ways to deter crime and establish respect in the hostile area.

No soldiers disputed that the two Iraqis were forced into the river. Soldiers testifying for the prosecution and defense said they never heard Perkins order the Iraqis into the river and that he stayed in his vehicle that night.

The soldiers said the orders came from Army 1st Lt. Jack Saville, the platoon leader, who was to be tried in March on the same charges as Perkins — as well as a conspiracy charge.

Helping out Iraqi children



Courtesy of U.S. Army

The Al Salama Organization, in coordination with the 1st Infantry Division-led Task Force Danger, delivers clothes, toys and other items donated by U.S. citizens to families in Kirkuk, Iraq, last week. Al Salama is Iraq's version of The Salvation Army, and it received the supplies through Operation Crayon, a program started to school materials for Iraqi children. It delivered 300 packages last week and is to hand out an additional 300 to 500 packages in the next 20 days.

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Wiesbaden	28 Jan-03 Feb
Wuerzburg	21-27 Jan

AAFES THEATERS

3 senior officials abducted

Iraqis: U.S. attack killed 14, wounded 5

By DUSAN STOJANOVIC

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Militants abducted three senior Iraqi officials, beheaded a man who worked for the U.S. military and killed at least eight others, officials said Saturday, a day after a U.S. general warned that insurgents may be planning "horrific" attacks ahead of Jan. 30 elections.

Also Saturday, an explosion at a house south of Mosul killed 14 people and wounded five early Saturday, and the owner blamed a U.S. air attack. A U.S. military spokesman said the Americans were compiling information on the incident and would have a statement later Saturday.

The house owner, Ali Yousef, said the airstrike happened at about 2:30 a.m. in this village 30 miles south of Mosul. American troops immediately came and surrounded the area, blocking access for four hours.

The brick house was reduced to a pile of rubble, according to an Associated Press photographer at the scene. By evening Saturday, all 14 dead had been buried in a nearby cemetery, Yousef said.

Air Force Brig. Gen. Erv Lessel, deputy chief of staff for strategic communications in Iraq, said Friday the United States has no intelligence indicating specific plots by the militants. But he said American leaders expect a rise in attacks.

"I think a worst case is where they have a series of horrific attacks that cause mass casualties in some spectacular fashion in the days leading up to the elections," Lessel said.

The escalating insurgency in Iraq is believed to be led by minority Sunnis, who dominated the country during Saddam Hussein's regime. The militants are against a the landmark election later this month.

In the election — the first democratic vote in Iraq since the country was formed in 1932, the Sunnis are certain to lose their dominance to the Shiites, who comprise 60 percent of Iraq's 26 million people.



Iraqi policemen and residents gather around the bullet-riddled vehicle of municipal council member Majid Hilal al-Tamimi in the southern city of Basra on Saturday. Al-Tamimi was seriously injured and one of his guards was killed after unknown assailants opened fire at them outside the city hall.

This week has seen a string of assassinations, suicide car bombings and other assaults that killed nearly 100 people, mostly Iraqi security troops, who are seen by the militants as collaborators with the American occupiers.

Authorities in Saddam's hometown of Tikrit said Saturday that gunmen abducted a deputy governor of a central Iraqi province, two other senior officials and their driver as they were returning from a meeting with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq's most prominent Shiite leader, in the holy city of Najaf to discuss national elections.

The delegation was stopped and the members kidnapped about 40 miles south of Baghdad on Friday. The area is in the so-called "triangle of death," a string of Sunni-controlled towns that have been the scene of frequent attacks.

The U.S. military said the delegation was traveling in two cars of which one managed to escape the militants' ambush.

"Those insurgents and terrorists who intimidate and resort to kidnapping public officials are the true enemies of the Iraqi people," said U.S. military spokesman Maj. Neal O'Brien.

Meanwhile, an official with Iraq's Interior Ministry said the ministry has launched a search operation for a missing French journalist and her translator, amid a possible witness account that they were abducted in downtown Baghdad.

Florence Aubenais, a reporter for the daily newspaper Liberation, and translator

Hussein Hanoun al-Saadi were last seen Wednesday morning leaving Aubenais' hotel in the Iraqi capital.

The Interior Ministry official said that so far they have no information or leads on their whereabouts.

"We have formed a fact-find working team to gather information about the Aubenais and al-Saadi, the official said on condition of anonymity.

In Baquba, insurgents beheaded a translator who was working with the U.S. army after breaking into his house, police said Saturday. An Iraqi policeman was killed by masked gunmen as he was leaving his house the southern Dora neighborhood of Baghdad.

Col. Khamees Jassin Kharbit, a ranking police official in the tense city of Ramadi was gunned down and his car was set ablaze, police said. Another senior police official, Lt. Col. Abed Ahmed, who supervised police operations in the volatile Anbar province, was shot dead on a street in central Ramadi.

A body-trapped car blew up Saturday at a gas station in Mahaveel, about 35 miles south of Baghdad. One man was killed and several others were injured, police said.

In Baghdad's western neighborhood of Khadra, gunmen killed Abboud Khalaf al-Lahibi, deputy secretary-general of the National Front for Iraqi tribes — a group representing several Iraqi tribes — his aide, Ibrahim al-Farhan, said. A bodyguard was killed and three others wounded in the attack, he said.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Friday, at least 1,350 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,056 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is eight higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Friday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths: Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,212 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 947 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military: ■ No deaths reported.

The latest identifications reported by the Defense Department and the Louisiana National Guard:

Killed Thursday by a roadside bomb in northwest Baghdad; assigned to the Army National Guard, 256th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, Lafayette, La. ■ Army Spc. Bradley Bergeron, Houma, La.

■ Army Sgt. Christopher Babin, Houma, La.

■ Army Pfc. Armand Frickey, Houma, La.

■ Army Spc. Warren Murphy, Marlene, La.

■ Army Spc. Huey Fassbender, LaPlace, La.

■ Army Sgt. 1st Class Kurt Comeaux, Raceland, La.

Killed Tuesday in Taji, Iraq, when an explosive detonated near their vehicle: ■ Army Spc. Jimmy D. Bue, 44, Florissant, Mo.

■ Army Spc. 135th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Fordyce, Ark.

■ Army Spc. Joshua S. Marcum, 33, Evening Shade, Ark., assigned to the National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment, 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Camden, Ark.

■ Army Spc. Jeremy W. McHaffrey, 28, Mahavale, Ark., assigned to the National Guard's 39th Infantry Brigade, Little Rock, Ark.

■ Marine Sgt. Zachariah S. Davis, 25, Twenty-nine Palms, Calif.; killed Thursday in Iraq's Anbar province; assigned to 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, Twenty-nine Palms, Calif.

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Julio C. Cisneros, 25, Alvarado, 22, Pharr, Texas; killed Thursday in Iraq's Anbar province; assigned to 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, Twenty-nine Palms, Calif.

■ Army Sgt. Bennie J. Washington, 25, Atlanta; died Tuesday in Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio of injuries sustained Oct. 14 in Ramadi, Iraq, when his vehicle was struck by a mine; assigned to the 44th Engineer Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Hawize, Korea.

■ Army Pfc. Curtis L. Wooten III, 20, Spaworth, Wash.; died Tuesday in Balad, Iraq, when an explosive detonated near his vehicle; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 7th Armored Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, Schweinfurt, Germany.

No bombshells in U.N. oil-for-food audits

By KEN GUGENHEIM

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United Nations' long-secret internal audits on the oil-for-food program do not reveal any bombshells, investigators told congressional aides Friday ahead of next week's release of the reports.

The 56 audits have been a source of contention between the United Nations and members of Congress examining allegations of corruption in the program. U.N. officials have declined to release the audits while a three-member commission appointed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan conducts its own investigation.

That refusal made lawmakers suspi-

cious that the audits pointed to widespread problems. It also contributed to criticism of Annan over the program and to one senator's calls for his resignation.

The commission, headed by former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker, announced Friday that it would release reports to the public Monday. Volcker is expected to issue a preliminary report this month that will include an analysis of the audits.

Two congressional aides, speaking on condition of anonymity, said congressional staff members were told by Volcker's investigators that the audits didn't reveal rampant corruption.

In an interview with The New York Times published Friday, Volcker was

quoted as saying the audits "don't prove anything." There's no flaming red flags in this stuff," he said.

The \$60 billion oil-for-food program was created as a humanitarian exemption to sanctions imposed on Iraq after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Beginning in 1996, it allowed Saddam Hussein's government to sell oil and use the proceeds to buy food, medicine and other items.

The program is widely credited with preventing starvation in Iraq, but investigations by congressional auditors and CIA weapons inspector Charles Duelfer found that it was riddled with corruption. They said Saddam received kickbacks and bribed U.N. and foreign government officials in an attempt to build political momentum against the sanctions.

Mobile assault platoons keep roads safe

Marines patrolling roads between Hit and Hadithah for more insurgent activity

BY JOSEPH GIORDANO
Stars and Stripes

HADITHAH, Iraq — Marines are aggressively targeting insurgents who plant roadside bombs and land mines along what's called the "Hit-Hadithah Corridor," a strategic stretch of desert roads running along the Euphrates River northwest of Fallujah.

The roads are used by both sides in the conflict: the U.S. military runs patrols and supply convoys; the insurgents use them to transport money, fighters and munitions in Al Anbar province.

Assembled in mobile assault platoons, or MAPs, Marines from the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment spend long, cold patrols keeping the routes clear. From Humvees on the roads or observation posts on high ground overlooking the corridor, the Marines watch for people planting roadside bombs or other explosive devices.

And increasingly, they look for suicide car bombers.

"That's the only thing left of that guy," said Sgt. William Henderson, platoon sergeant of MAP 3, pointing to charred bits of twisted metal off the side of the road Thursday. The day before, a sedan painted with the orange-and-white markings of Iraqi



JOSEPH GIORDANO/Stars and Stripes

Marines from Mobile Assault Platoon 3 check out a terrain map they found in the desert near Hadithah, Iraq, northwest of Fallujah. They suspect it is used by insurgents to track U.S. military movements and plan attacks.

taxicabs detonated as a U.S. convoy passed.

In that attack, only the suicide bomber was killed.

On a typical patrol, the MAP teams spend 12 hours combing the roads, checking for indications of freshly laid munitions and searching suspect vehicles. The insurgents, Marines say, tend to strike in the same spots, so careful attention is paid to several intersections and stretches of road.

On Thursday, a howling, bitterly cold

wind made for a long patrol for MAP 3. Henderson and Cpl. Ben McGuire, a 25-year-old from Red Oak, Texas, took turns halting traffic while other Marines inspected the routes. Several times, warning shots were fired at vehicles acting erratically or getting too close to the Marines.

"I don't worry about the mortars or the IEDs. I worry about the VBIEDs," the military's acronym for vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, said Lance Cpl. John Knepper, a 20-year-old from Austin, Texas.

Knepper has seen firsthand what the car bombs can do. A few weeks back, a suicide bomber detonated less than 30 yards from a group of Marines; several were injured by shrapnel, but most were saved from serious injury by a thick stone wall.

"That was the biggest explosion I've ever seen. It was incredible," said Knepper, who still has pieces of shrapnel in his arm from a land mine encountered on a different patrol.

Late in the afternoon, the Marines of MAP 3 pulled off the roads and patrolled near an old Iraqi military outpost. Nearby, they found a terrain model made of small stones on the desert floor; an arrow pointed north, and holes of stones of formed buildings and roads. The Marines guessed it was made by insurgents.

The patrol then occupied a strategic overlook, using high-powered optics to watch the traffic below. Traffic in the area has picked up in recent days, the Marines said, as many locals start the Hajj, the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.

The Marines watched for people dropping or using high-powered optics to watch the traffic below. Traffic in the area has picked up in recent days, the Marines said, as many locals start the Hajj, the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.

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E-1 AND ABOVE APPROVED

Bombs can wrack troops' nerves as well as bodies

BY JASON CHUDY
Stars and Stripes

BAGHDAD, Iraq — When a vehicle patrol from Company B of the 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment was struck by a roadside bomb Tuesday morning, the soldiers — none of whom were in-

jured in the blast — literally picked up the pieces of the artillery round and moved on.

The platoon didn't have time to dwell on the incident; the patrol schedule wouldn't allow it.

"We've still got to continue down patrols," said Pfc. John Howell, a machine gunner on the Humvee closest to the explosion. "So that takes priority."

But just because there were no physical injuries does not mean the soldiers were not affected by the explosion. Army officials know soldiers can be rattled by the blasts, and their performance harmed.

"Early on we kept a big eye on" the soldiers on patrol after a bomb went off, said Company B 1st Sgt. Freddy Krail. "[Roadside bombs] are not a common thing, but they've happened before."

Now, he said, the unit, deployed to Iraq from Fort Hood, Texas, relies on the noncommissioned officers at the platoon level to notify leaders if any problems develop. They have the closest day-to-day interaction with the junior soldiers and will best notice any changes in them.

"If they say [the soldier needs to talk to someone about it, we trust their instincts]," Krail said. Many of the soldiers let Tuesday's bombing pass without much discussion. That patrol is over and they had another to run less than eight hours.

"I really don't talk about it unless someone brings it up," said Spc. George Ernie.

When the soldiers do talk about similar incidents, the discussion ranges from casual to cautious.



JASON CHUDY/Stars and Stripes

Pvt. Richard Martinez of Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, holds up three pieces of a 152 mm artillery round that blew up alongside of his patrol recently. None of the soldiers were injured nor were any of their vehicles damaged.

"Nobody jokes about it," said Ernie. The stakes are too high to take the bombs too lightly.

Company B has not suffered a casualty to a roadside bomb. Krail said, "I think not having had a casualty yet has lent itself to the soldiers not being happy [about being possible targets], but not being fearful about traveling through their sectors," he said.

That evening another patrol — with mostly the same soldiers as the early morning run — went out to that same area. The soldiers

didn't dwell on the chance of there being another bomb.

"The possibility of one being out there is always there," said Ernie. "It's not something we really think about."

The soldiers just hope that they make it safely through their remaining tour in Iraq.

"The insurgents only have to be lucky once," said Sgt. Michael Wilbanks. "We have to be lucky every day. That's the unfortunate truth."

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IN THE STATES

Snow pounds Calif. as Ohio faces flooding

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Another winter blast spread snow and heavy rain across California on Saturday as residents of waterlogged areas that were stripped by wildfires braced for flash flooding and mudslides.

As much as 6 feet of snow was possible during the weekend in the northern Sierra Nevada, delighting skiers, while homeowners rushed to pile sandbags in Southern California, where some neighborhoods below the San Bernardino Mountains east of Los Angeles received more than a half-inch of rain every hour.

"I used to love the rain," said Dallas Brascone of San Bernardino County's Devore area. "Now, I dread all these storms."

In the East, heavy rain and snow that fell earlier in the week caused flooding along the Ohio River that was chasing some residents out of their homes in communities in West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky. Meteorologists predicted the river would reach its highest level in eight years at Louisville, Ky.

The stormy weather had caused widespread power outages in parts of Ohio, and utilities said about 100,000 homes and businesses remained without electricity on Saturday.

California's latest storm arrived Thursday and wasn't expected to let up until Monday, the National Weather Service said.

The wild weather knocked out power for thousands of homes and businesses and blocked mountain roads. One person died in a sailboat smashed by wind and waves and two resort workers in the Sierra were found dead in a snow-covered car.



Homeowners were especially concerned in San Bernardino County foothill towns that were devastated by wildfires and mudslides in 2003.

"You can only do so much," said Thom Master of Devore. "If 2 feet of mud comes, these little sandbags aren't going to do much."

Along the Ohio River, hundreds of Ohio and West Virginia residents had evacuated their homes and stacked sandbags.

The river was nearly 4 feet above flood stage and still rising Saturday morning at Point Pleasant, W.Va., and was about 7 feet above flood stage but beginning to recede at Marietta, Ohio, the National Weather Service said. Downstream, it was expected to crest Tuesday at slightly more than 5 feet above at Cincinnati, the weather service said.

Water was 2 to 4 feet deep Saturday in

the streets of downtown Marietta, closing businesses.

Louisville had already closed part of its River Road and installed two of its flood gates, and the Caesars Indiana riverboat casino in Harrison County, Ind., was shut down. The expected 28-foot crest at Louisville, 5 feet over flood stage, would be the highest since the March 1997 flood.

People who live along the Ohio learn to cope with its floods.

"The first thing I do before I go is clean the fireplace," said Sherry Welch of Juniper Beach, Ky., who had friends helping her pack furniture into a truck Friday. "If you don't do that, water will come in and leave a ring all around the inside of your house like a great big ring around a bathtub."

"One year I had to move three times," she said as water lapped at the edge of her patio.



AP photos

Above: As a new round of storms hit the Sierra and Lake Tahoe, motorist Jesse Syfert tightens the chains on his car Friday in Meyers, Calif., before heading over Echo Summit on U.S. Highway 50 to the Bay Area. Left: Marietta City Auditor Sharon Adams makes her way past sandbags on Friday, as floodwaters closed in on downtown businesses in Marietta, Ohio.

Chemical threat from S.C. train wreck lingers

By JENNIFER HOLLAND

The Associated Press

GRANITEVILLE, S.C. — Toxic vapors from one of the nation's deadliest chemical spills in years will keep residents out of their homes until at least early next week as cleanup crews try to stop chlorine gas from leaking out of a wrecked train car.

At least eight people died and more than 250 were sickened after a freight train carrying the gas crashed early Thursday near a textile mill. The accident unleashed a greenish-yellow fog that seared people's eyes and lungs.

About 5,400 residents within a one-mile radius of the crash were forced to evacuate, with authorities telling people Friday they would not be allowed to return until Tuesday at earliest. A dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed within two miles of the wreck for fear that cool night air would cause the chlorine to settle close to the ground.

Authorities said all the deaths appeared to have been caused by the plume of gas that settled over its victims in their homes, their cars and the Avondale Mills textile plant. One of the dead was spotted by Gov. Mark Sanford, who flew over the site to survey the wreckage.

Two nine-member crews were working around the clock to apply a steel patch over a fist-sized hole in the train, said Aiken County Sheriff's Lt. Michael Frank. The work could take until late Saturday.

Workers also were to begin removing chlorine from two additional railroad tank cars involved in the crash.

The accident happened about 2:40 a.m. Thursday when a Norfolk Southern freight

Chlorine gas cleanup

STAY AWAY: Toxic vapors from a deadly chemical spill will keep about 5,400 residents out of their homes until at least early next week.

WHAT NOW? Environmental cleanup workers are trying to patch a hole in a freight train carrying chlorine gas that crashed early Thursday.

FALLOUT: At least eight people died and more than 250 were sickened when the crash unleashed a greenish-yellow fog that smelled powerfully like bleach.

— The Associated Press

train carrying 42 cars struck a parked train at a crossing next to the plant, where 400 workers were on the night shift making denim and other fabrics.

Monica Channey, 29, heard the boom at home when the trains collided but thought nothing of it at first. "It's always something with the trains or with the mill," she said.

But when authorities came to evacuate her and her 12-year-old son and 10-year-old daughter, she bundled the children up "like mummies."

Channey had a scarf covering her mouth but could still smell the chlorine. "The fumes were like 'whoosh' — a bad ammonia, stronger than any cleaning solution," she said. "It took my breath away."

Five workers died at the mill. A man was found dead in a truck near the plant. Another man was found dead in his home. The train engineer died at a hospital.

Federal officials were investigating the cause of the wreck, but most officials were kept out of the area because of the toxic gas.



AP

Sgt. David Turno, left, with the Aiken County Department of Public Safety, suits up Friday near the command center in Aiken, S.C. He was preparing to go into Graniteville to conduct a door-to-door search of homes near the train-crash site.

State and federal environmental officials have continued conducting air quality tests, finding either low levels or nothing at all a couple blocks away from the site. The crash site levels were higher.

"How high? We are not sure," state Department of Health and Environmental Control spokesman Thom Berry said. The levels exceed the monitor's limits, he said.

2005 shaping up as hectic year for Supreme Court

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court returns Monday with an ailing leader, pressure to rule quickly on the constitutionality of federal prison sentences and a slew of contentious issues to decide, from medical marijuana to Ten Commandment displays.

The most immediate concern is the health of Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, who was diagnosed with thyroid cancer in October. He has been working part time at the court for more than two weeks but still is too ill to return to the bench.

At 80, Rehnquist already was considered a top retirement prospect on a court that has had no turnover in a decade, a record.

Besides Rehnquist, Justices John Paul Stevens, 84, and Sandra Day O'Connor, 74, are considered possibilities to leave this year.

In upcoming cases, justices could rule as early as this week on whether the longtime system for sentencing federal defendants should be thrown out because it lets judges, rather than juries, decide factors that add years to prison time. Many judges have delayed sentencing while awaiting the high court's decision.

Other major cases involve whether states can execute juvenile killers, whether the federal government can prosecute people who use marijuana medically, and whether states can bar interstate wine sales over the Internet.

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Pitt, Aniston call it quits

Actors officially separate

BY JOHN ROGERS
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston have finally made official what was rumored for months — Hollywood's A-List couple is splitting up. "We would like to announce that after seven years together, we have decided to formally separate," the couple said in a joint statement released Friday by Pitt's publicist, Cindy Guagenti.

"For those who follow these sorts of things, we would like to explain that our separation is not the result of any speculation reported by the tabloid media. This decision is the result of much thoughtful consideration."

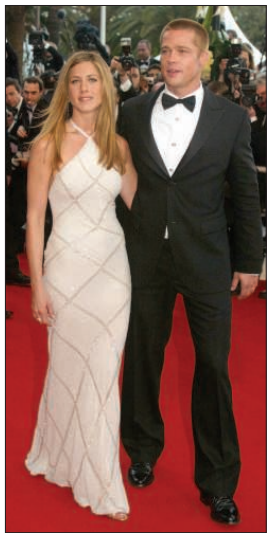
The couple didn't indicate if they planned to divorce, and Guagenti declined to comment beyond the statement, which also said, "We happily remain committed and caring friends with great love and admiration for one another."

The separation comes 4½ years after the pair's storybook wedding and after months of tabloid speculation that their marriage was in trouble.

In their statement, they asked for the public's "sensitivity in the coming months."

Pitt, 41, and Aniston, 35, have been together since being set up on a blind date in 1998. They were married in a lavish wedding on July 29, 2000, on a Malibu estate overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

Until rumors began swirling that they were about to split, there were near-constant tabloid rumors that Aniston was pregnant. The actual half child People in 2002 that she and Pitt eventually had to start a family.



Brad Pitt and his wife, Jennifer Aniston, arrive for a screening of the film "Troy" at the Cannes Film Festival in France last year. Pitt and Aniston have split, Pitt's longtime publicist confirmed Friday.

Sen. Clinton's former finance aide indicted

BY LARRY MARGASAK
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The finance director for Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's 2000 campaign is charged in a federal indictment with intentionally understating contributions for a Hollywood fund-raising gala for the senator.

The four-count indictment, unsealed Friday in Los Angeles, charged David Rosen with filing false reports with the Federal Election Commission.

The charges focus on an Aug. 12, 2000, dinner and concert supported by more than \$1.1 million in "in-kind contributions" — goods and services provided for free or below cost. The event was estimated to cost more than \$1.2 million.

The FBI previously said in court papers that it had evidence the former first lady's campaign deliberately understated its fund-raising costs so it would have more money to spend on her campaign.

While the event cost more than \$1.2 million, the indictment alleged, Rosen reported contributions of about \$400,000, knowing the figure to be false.

The indictment charged that he provided some documents to an FEC compliance officer but withheld the true costs of the event and provided false documents to substantiate the lower figure.

In one instance, Rosen obtained and delivered a fraudulent

invoice stating the cost of a concert associated with the gala was \$200,000 when he knew that figure was false, according to the indictment. The actual cost of the concert was more than \$600,000.

Each of the four counts of making a false statement carries a maximum penalty of up to five years in prison and up to \$250,000 in fines upon conviction.

Rosen's attorney, Paul Mark Sandler, did not return a call asking for comment. Clinton's lawyer on campaign finance matters, David Kendall, said, "The Senate Campaign Committee has fully cooperated with the investigation. Mr. Rosen worked hard for the campaign, and we trust that when all the facts are in, he will be cleared."

The businessman who hosted the event, Peter Paul, has told federal authorities that it cost more than \$1 million and that he had been surprised when he saw that most of the contributions were not reported.

The money from the fund-raiser went to Clinton's successful campaign for a Senate seat from New York, the Democrats' national Senate campaign organization and a state Democratic Party committee.

The joint fund raising made the rules more complicated because the gala raised both "hard money" — funds given to candidates subject to federal limits — and "soft money" that was unregulated and unlimited under the former campaign finance law.

JFK's sister Rosemary, 86, dies at Wis. hospital

BY LOLITA C. BALDOR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — While Rosemary Kennedy spent much of her life shielded from the public eye, her struggles with mental retardation inspired her sister to encourage millions of mentally disabled athletes to publicly celebrate their differences.

Kennedy, the oldest sister of President John F. Kennedy and the inspiration for the Special Olympics, died Friday. She was 86.

Kennedy, the third child of Rose and Joseph Kennedy, was born mentally retarded and underwent a lobotomy when she was 23. She lived most of her life in a Jefferson, Wis., institution, the St. Coletta School for Exceptional Children.

She died at Fort Atkinson Memorial Health Hospital in Wisconsin with her brother Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and her sisters by her side, the family said in a statement.

"Rosemary was a lifelong jewel to every member of our family," the statement said. "From her earliest years, her mental retardation was a continuing inspiration to each of us and a powerful source of our family's commitment to do all we can to help all people with disabilities live full and productive lives."

Rosemary Kennedy's condition became an inspiration to her

younger sister, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who founded the Special Olympics for mentally disabled athletes, and in 1984 she took over her sister's care after their mother had a stroke.

Rosemary's retardation became public in 1960, just after her brother John was elected president. The National Association for Retarded Children mentioned in a publication that the president-elect "has a mentally retarded sister who is in an institution in Wisconsin."

Born Rose Marie Kennedy on Sept. 13, 1918, in Boston, she was known as Rosemary or Rosie to friends and family. In her own diaries before the lobotomy, she chronicled a life of tea dances, dress fittings, trips to Europe and a visit to the Roosevelt White House.

But as she got older, her father worried his daughter's mild condition would lead her into situations that could damage the family's reputation.

"Rosemary was a woman, and there was a dread fear of pregnancy, disease and disgrace," author Laurence Leamer wrote in an unauthorized Kennedy biography.

Doctors told Joseph Kennedy that a lobotomy would help his daughter and calm her mood swings.

Rosemary lived in several private institutions before her father placed her in St. Coletta, a hour west of Milwaukee.

First family shows off newest member



President Bush and first lady Laura Bush show off their new puppy, a Scottish terrier named Miss Beazley, on the South Lawn of the White House on Thursday afternoon. The White House's new resident was a gift to Mrs. Bush from the president for her 58th birthday in November, but the 10-week-old puppy had to wait until this week to move in. Although Scottish terriers are often aggressive with other dogs, there appeared to be no animosity between Miss Beazley and the older first dog, Barney, whose half brother is Miss Beazley's father. Barney gave his younger companion a few good sniffs, but they mostly roamed the grass and ignored each other — and the first lady's calls for them to come. "Behaves like a puppy," the president said of the new pooch, recalling Barney's habit of ignoring commands from the president.



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REDSXWIN sparks rush on vanity plates

BY GLENN ADAMS
The Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Maine — New Englanders, almost as fond of their vanity license plates as they are of chowdah, lobster and their beloved Boston Red Sox, are proclaiming pride in the World Series champions with car-bumper messages that drive the point home.

Some are a bit in-your-face, such as WE WIN and VCTORY. Others are a little more subtle, such as ESRCU04, a Mainer's way of spelling out the reverse of the Curse. Others elated to see the Bambino's hex lifted asked for CURSE-NO and 1914-RIP.

The Red Sox had barely completed their four-game World Series sweep over the St. Louis Cardinals on Oct. 27 before the orders started coming in to Maine's Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Maine officials said.

"Within hours of the final out in Game 4 of the World Series, requests for Red Sox-related vanity plates began to arrive," said then-Secretary of State Dan Gwadosky. The BMV received more than 60 requests by the time a Nov. 9 order was submitted for plate production.

"Dozens of additional requests have been received since. The total probably exceeds 100 at this point, and counting," said Gwadosky, whose term was to end Friday.

One motorist requested FENWAY, the venerable old ballpark that's home of the world champs. Variations from feminine Sox fans sought the monikers FNNV-CHIK, BSTN-GRL and SOX CHIK. Another request seeks to identify

a Mainer as part of a larger realm, RDSXNTN, or Red Sox Nation for the uninitiated.

Joyce McKenney's plate, SXWIN04, turned out to be confusing to some non-sports fans, who ask why it says "sex, wino, four," the Richmond, Maine, resident said.

"Sports people, they love it. They think it's awesome," said McKenney, who watches every Red Sox game on TV or listens on the radio. "It's people who have no clue about sports who sit there and scratch their heads."

Another Maine fan's request for OREDSOX reflects the sweet satisfaction of a series championship after a seemingly endless 86-year wait — or maybe it's just an Irish spin on the team's name.

Fans who don't want anyone to forget that sweep over St. Louis ordered SOXIN4 and REDSOX-4.

A dozen Rhode Islanders asked for Red Sox vanity plates after the team's first World Series championship since 1918, said Nancy Tracy of the state's DMV. Some of their requests are RDSXFN, RDSX04, WE WIN and VCTORY.

The rush for Red Sox vanity plates was not nearly so intense in their home state, where only eight were ordered after the series.

Fans craving to identify with their heroes seemed more interested in buying state-issue specialty Red Sox plates that raise money for children's cancer research, said Rob Creedon, spokesman for the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles.

"Our numbers kind of spiked after the playoffs," said Creedon.

Massachusetts drivers mostly asked for a variation of the team's name, such as RZOX04 and



Avid Red Sox baseball fan Joyce McKenney of Richmond, Maine — who is wearing an anti-New York Yankees baseball cap — poses by her vanity plate Thursday.

SAWX04, while one sought to display the number worn by pitcher Curt Schilling and asked for RDSX38.

Vermonters were ahead of the game and had snapped up the obvious slogans long before the Red Sox ended their long World Series drought, said Motor Vehicles Commissioner Bonnie Rutledge.

"We already had some vanity plates related to Red Sox, but they've been out there for quite a while," said Rutledge. "We've had none since they won."

In Connecticut, there's no way to tell how many Sox fans paid extra for vanity plates commemorating the World Series champs, motor vehicle spokesman Bill Seymour said.

"There are too many possibilities that could be associated with that," Seymour said.

Connecticut motorists can display plates that benefit Long Island Sound, child safety and pet care, but the state has no official license plate honoring the Red Sox.

Massachusetts has its Red Sox "Jimmy Fund" plates. In Maine, a bill submitted to the Legislature seeks a special Red Sox plate.

Officials in New Hampshire's motor vehicle agency didn't return phone calls.

The Granite State is among those with an online service through which motorists can see if the vanity plates they choose are already taken.

Interest in Red Sox vanity plates isn't limited to New England.

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Study: Preemies often develop disabilities

More than half of 'miracle babies' are at risk for long-term problems

BY STEPHANIE NANO
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Tiny "miracle babies" make for heartwarming stories, but the reality is that nearly half of all infants born extremely premature have significant learning and physical disabilities by the time they reach school age, the largest such study found.

Medical advances have allowed doctors to save earlier and smaller babies. While some developmental problems are known to be common among such children, the long-term consequences were not entirely clear.

"We needed to have some idea of really what this group was like when they grew up," said one of the researchers, Dr. Neil Marlow, a neonatologist at the University of Nottingham in England.

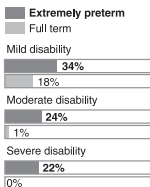
Guidelines call for not resuscitating the most severely premature babies, but where to draw the line is a controversial and emotional decision. The study's findings may help guide doctors and parents about whether it is wise to use heroic measures.

"Parents need to go into this situation with their eyes wide open and with an open dialogue with their doctors as to what they should do," Marlow said.

Normal pregnancy is 37 to 42 weeks. Marlow and his colleagues looked at 241 children

Preterm and disability linked

According to a recent study, nearly half of all infants born extremely premature have significant more learning and physical disabilities by the time they reach school age than their classroom peers.



SOURCE: New England Journal of Medicine

about 6 years old who had been born between 22 and 25 weeks. They found that 46 percent had severe or moderate disabilities such as cerebral palsy, vision or hearing loss and learning problems; 34 percent were mildly disabled; and 20 percent had no disabilities. Twelve percent had disabling cerebral palsy.



MARCH OF DIMES/AP

Navy Anderson is seen Nov. 11, 1997, at University of Utah Hospital in Salt Lake City in an incubator, one week after being born prematurely.

"This gives for the first time a real picture of what happens to these children who are at the limits of viability," said another researcher, Dieter Wolke of the University of Bristol in England.

Their findings are reported in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

The rate of premature births in the United States has crept up in recent years, in part because of a rise in multiple births and older mothers.

"It's important to realize that prematurity is a major public

health problem. One in eight babies are born prematurely," said Dr. Scott Berns of the March of Dimes.

The British researchers tracked all extremely premature births in Britain and Ireland over a 10-month period in 1995. Of those who were born live, only a quarter survived and eventually went home from the hospital — 1 percent of those born at 22 weeks; 11 percent at 23 weeks; 26 percent at 24 weeks; and 44 percent at 25 weeks.

The surviving children were

tested at 2½ years, and about a quarter had severe disabilities. They were evaluated again at about 6 years.

Standard intelligence tests showed 21 percent of them had moderate or severe learning disabilities. That figure rose to 41 percent when compared to the test scores of a group of similar classmates who were born at full term.

In an accompanying editorial, Drs. Betty Vohr of Women and Infants Hospital in Providence, R.I., and Marilee Allen of Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, said the study shows the limits of what medicine can do.

They cited publicity about "miracle babies" as one reason parents might seek to have their very premature child resuscitated.

Last month, a Chicago hospital said a premature infant born at 8.6 ounces is believed to be the smallest baby to survive.

"We wish they all were little miracle babies, but they're not," Vohr said in an interview.

Jamie Anderson of Logan, Utah, had to make a quick decision right before her twins were born at 23 weeks in 1997. She decided to have them resuscitated, although she knew the chances of survival were low and there was a risk of disabilities.

Her son, born at 507 grams (1 pound, 2 ounces), died within hours. Her daughter, Navy, who was 620 grams (1 pound, 6 ounces), endured four months of operations and blood transfusions before going home from the hospital.

"We were fortunate to have one survive, but we know what it's like to lose one," said Anderson, who will be sharing her experience as a March of Dimes ambassador this year.

As for her now 7-year-old daughter, Anderson said she is doing great with no complications and recently passed two milestones: learning to read and ride a two-wheel bike.

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Hiking style dictates benefits

BY MARILYNN MARCHIONE

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — If exercise is too much of an uphill battle, you may want to try the downside.

A novel study of hikers in the Alps made the intriguing discovery that different types of exercise had different effects on fats and sugars in the blood.

Going uphill cleared fats from the blood faster, going downhill reduced blood sugar more, and hiking either way lowered bad cholesterol.

Both types of hiking are beneficial, but one may help diabetics more than the other, said Dr. Heinz Drexel of the Academic Teaching Hospital of Feldkirch, Austria, who reported the research at a recent American Heart Association conference in New Orleans.

His was a most unusual study, involving steep mountain passes and lifts at a ski resort.

"If you think about this in practical terms, it's pretty hard to imagine how any human being could just go one way and get back to where they started unless they happen to live near a cable car, which was used in this study," said Dr. Raymond Gibbons, a cardiologist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., who had no role in the research.

Still, Dr. Gerald Fletcher, a cardiologist at the Mayo

Clinic in Jacksonville, Fla., said the findings could be applied in the real world: People who work in office buildings, for example, could take the stairs one way and the elevator the other, depending on what their exercise goals were.

Hiking uphill is concentric exercise, where muscles are shortened, which happens when you bend your arm or step upward.

Going downhill is eccentric muscle work, such as extending your arm or actively resisting stretching, which happens when you step down.

The Austrian researchers tested both forms of exercise on 45 healthy people who normally exercised very little. For the study, the participants took three to five hour-long hikes each week. For two months they hiked uphill and rode the ski lift down. The next two months they took the lift up and hiked down.

Their blood sugar and cholesterol levels were checked before the study started and after each two-month exercise segment. They also were given tests to see how quickly and well their blood removed fats and sugar after each exercise phase.

The hikers made no changes in their diets, so that the effects of the exercise could be isolated.

This could be good news for diabetics, who often have trouble with concentric and many types of aerobic exercise, Drexel said.



Hikers make their way on one of the Viennese hiking paths in Vienna, Austria, in November. A study of hikers in the Alps made the intriguing discovery that different types of exercise had different effects on fats and sugars in the blood. Going uphill cleared fats from the blood faster; going downhill reduced blood sugar more, and either way lowered bad cholesterol.

Theaters welcome babies to special movie screenings

BY MELISSA MANSFIELD

The Associated Press

RHINEBECK, N.Y. — Monte Romero sat on his mom's lap, looking up at the movie playing on the big screen and chomping on popcorn. After a few moments, he rubbed his eyes, hopped back out into the aisle and went exploring. The 2-year-old stopped and shouted, "Go!" while pointing to the screen, then returned to his mother.

Nobody shushed him. No rolled eyes or piercing stares accused Monte's mother, Marika, of ruining "Guerrilla: The Taking of Patty Hearst" by bringing along a toddler.

"See why you can't bring him to the mall?" Marika said, scooping him up onto her lap again. "He gets very excited."

The Romeros were at a "Bring Your Own Baby" movie at Upstate Films. Joining small movie houses and national theater chains, the Rhinebeck theater has begun to show special screenings just for parents and children.

The first-run films are the same ones the theater offers the rest of the week. Patrons can pick up a bottle of ginger ale or root beer, a homemade cookie or popcorn with real butter. When the movie starts, the lights dim, but do not turn off entirely. The soundtrack is loud enough to hear, soft enough for babies to sleep through.

Marika Romero recalled bringing "Monty" to a recent screening of "Ray," about music legend Ray Charles, at a regular theater. She hoped he would sleep if he got bored.

"Once the first band started, he

went 'Drums, mama! Drums!' " she said.

The two spent the rest of the movie outside with the carpet sweeper.

"I do miss the big screen," she sighed, as she waited for the matinee to start.

Upstate Films has shown three "Bring Your Own Baby" movies so far, with hopes of continuing the program through the next year.

Parents pay regular matinee admission; the babies get in for free.

"The people who come are really happy," said Steve Leibner, who co-founded the nonprofit arts organization with his wife Dede in 1972. "There is no one to say 'Shhh... be quiet.'"

Leibner heard of other theaters with matinees for moms, and wanted to try it. "It gives us a chance to get the people who were moviegoers" before they had children.

Midwestern chain Kerasotes Theatres holds "Matinee Movie Magic for Moms (and Dads)" weekly at four of its 75 theaters, featuring a stroller valet outside the theater to help accommodate the new parents.

Loews Cineplex Entertainment launched a program called "Reel Moms" three years ago, and now operates in 20 cities. Loews' spokesman John McCauley said, "The moms are also able to be very present, seeing the latest movies."

Many of the moms who contact the company say they feel isolated after having children and it helps to interact with other new parents in a social setting.

"We get to bring moms together, going through the same life stage," he said.

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Earhart's stepson plans to search anew

Company plans to launch expedition for vanished aviator this spring

BY LIZ DOUP

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — The world loves a mystery, and Amelia Earhart's is a classic.

Nearly 68 years ago, America's fearless female flier took off from a Miami airstrip and vanished in the Pacific on a flight around the world.

Now, a Maine-based ocean exploratory company plans to launch an expedition this spring looking for Earhart's plane.

You can understand if Earhart's stepson, George Putnam Jr., feels as if he has flown this course before. Searchers have sporadically looked for Earhart's Lockheed Electra since it disappeared July 2, 1937, near Howland Island, a spit of land in the Pacific Ocean, about halfway between Australia and Hawaii.

Over the years, more than 100 books, movies and documentaries have mined the unfinished story of her remarkable life and her mysterious death. She offered pride and hope to a country crippled by the Great Depression. In the '20s and '30s, when many women didn't even drive a car, Earhart set records in the sky.

Putnam — 16 when his stepmother disappeared — would like to see Earhart's story completed. And at 83, he'd like to see that happen soon.

At his Boynton Beach, Fla., home, the genial Putnam, with a touch of gray hair and an easy smile, recalls a swirl of unproven stories that surround Earhart's disappearance.

She was part of an espionage mission, spying on the Japanese. She ran off with Fred Noonan, her navigator. She landed on a nearby island and died there.

Putnam has his own take on what happened to the woman who took him flying. And his isn't so dramatic or intriguing.



KRT

George Putnam, 83, of Boynton Beach, Fla., is Amelia Earhart's stepson. A new expedition is searching for Earhart's lost plane. At Putnam's desk is a reprint of the July 5, 1937, Chicago Herald and Examiner with headlines about the search for Earhart.

Says Putnam, matter of factly, "The plane ran out of gas."

Longtime friend Elgen Long, who'll be part of the search expedition, shares Putnam's belief.

Earhart and Noonan had 22,000 miles behind them when they took off from Papua New Guinea and were headed to Howland Island to refuel.

Only 7,000 miles remained in her goal: to be the first woman to fly around the world. At the time, she was three weeks shy of her 40th birthday.

Using records that detailed air speed and weather conditions, Long charted her course across the Pacific. She ran into one fatal problem: headwinds stronger than she expected.

"She thought she had four extra hours of gas," Long says. "The headwinds changed that."

Among her last radio messages: "... gas running low. Been unable [to] reach you by radio."

In 2002, Long joined an underwater search for Earhart's plane led by Nauticos, the same company behind the current ven-

ture. Mechanical failure ended that search after about six weeks.

Now they plan to continue their search using sophisticated sonar equipment to sweep 1,000 square miles of the ocean's floor northwest of Howland Island. Estimated cost: \$1.5 million.

Long believes the plane is in water nearly four miles below the ocean's surface, so deep the temperature is near freezing.

"It's like putting something in the deep freeze," he says.

At the time Earhart and Noonan disappeared, the U.S. government launched a search that covered 250,000 square miles of ocean, but no trace of the plane was found.

Today's intricate equipment — even better than the tools that helped pinpoint the Titanic, Long says — gives searchers a better chance.

If they do find anything, Putnam hopes it will make its way into a museum for all to see. He understands that the amazing Earhart they were married.

"She was a role model to women. What she did took courage and stamina," he says. Putnam's father, part of the Putnam publishing family, was Earhart's promoter before they were married.

His mother was also a maverick who traveled the globe and liked adventure. Initially, at least, Earhart and his mother, Dorothy, were friends.

Putnam, only 10 when his parents' marriage broke up, doesn't remember any marital turmoil. And he liked Earhart, "who was always nice to me."

Putnam remembers his father's efforts to find his wife, long after the official search ended. In his desperate search, he offered cash for any information and was victimized by hoaxes.

"If they can find the plane, it would wipe out all the oddball stories," Putnam says. "Finally, it would all be put to rest."



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Queen Victoria's gunmaker opens first shop in America

BY GAIL SCHONTZLER

Bozeman Daily Chronicle

BOZEMAN, Mont. — English gunmaker Westley Richards made pistols and rifles that the British Army fired at Napoleon at Waterloo.

Since then, the firm, founded in 1812, has made fine hunting guns and rifles for Queen Victoria, the maharajahs of India and the famed safari hunters of Africa. So it's no wonder that people around Bozeman weren't quite sure what to make of it when the U.S. agent for the venerable gunmaker opened its only store in America here.

"By the time Lewis and Clark published their journals, Westley Richards had published four catalogs," said Jim Kilday, a partner in Westley Richards Agency USA.

The Westley Richards store itself has walls adorned with trophies of gazelle, greater kudu and long-necked giraffe. It sells Courtney boots and shoes made in Zimbabwe from the hides of cape buffalo, ostrich and hippopotamus.

And its four safes hold firearms worth more than \$1 million.

Kilday, 62, and his son, Kevin, 33, the agency's general manager,

talked recently about why they have brought the romance of English firearms to the wilds of Montana.

It was a childhood dream come true, Jim Kilday said, when the opportunity arose a year ago to go into business with the Clode family, which has operated Westley Richards in England for nearly 50 years.

"They considered making their headquarters in Ireland or Italy or a major American city, Kilday said. "We picked Bozeman, because Bozeman is paradise — one of the great undiscovered places." Ninety percent of their business of buying and selling firearms is done over the Internet. And their clients, many of them sportsmen from places like Texas and California, already like to travel to Bozeman to a fish and hunt.

The Bozeman agency imports firearms from England and trades hundreds of used guns, which can sell for as much as \$85,000, for a 15 percent commission fee.

Westley Richards is the oldest of the big three English makers of fine guns, James Purdey & Sons having been founded in 1814 and Holland & Holland in 1835.

Today the English company builds just 50 new firearms a year.

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IN THE WORLD

Visitors complicate aid as two pass 150,000

BY JOCELYN GECKER

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — Rescue workers extracted thousands of corpses from the mud and debris of tsunami-devastated coastal towns in Indonesia, pushing the rising death toll from the Asian disaster past 150,000 on Saturday.

Two weeks after walls of water flattened wide swaths of Indonesia's Sumatra island, people were still emerging from isolated villages, looking hungry and haunted. Staggered by the scale of the disaster, aid officials described plans to feed as many as 2 million survivors a day for six months.

Two Indonesian navy amphibious vessels pulled up on the beach Saturday among the wreckage of smashed boats. Hundreds of refugees lined up on the beach to go inside and unload supplies in Calang, where the tsunami killed 80 percent of the residents. The Indonesian military set up two field hospitals, one with 50 beds, the other with 20.

"The tragedy was terrible, but considering this, the survivors here now are in pretty good shape," said Dr. Steve Wignall, an American who works for Family Health International and was making an on-the-ground assessment with several other aid workers.

In other areas, victims were more vulnerable, though health officials said there were no signs yet of major outbreaks of diseases that they have feared.

As aid poured into a region long troubled by separatist violence, Indonesian soldiers resumed patrols in Aceh province searching for rebels. Skirmishes are stoking fears the conflict could hamper the relief effort by dozens of international aid groups.

Problems persisted in coordinating the humanitarian

aid efforts. Aid groups complained that dignitaries flying in to see the devastation have choked the tiny main airport and hampered relief supplies.

Visits by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell shut Banda Aceh's airport temporarily for security reasons.

"It slows things down," said Maj. Murad Khan, a spokesman for Pakistan's Tsunami Relief Task Force.

U.S. officials disputed the allegation, saying Powell's plane took off immediately after dropping him off Wednesday so it wouldn't be in the way. He toured the area by helicopter, and Tim Gerbardon, a spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, said aid shipments continued to flow during that time.

A delegation of U.S. congressmen traveled to Banda Aceh later Saturday. They came by helicopter from the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier so they wouldn't disrupt other flights.

Annan toured a town in Sri Lanka where hundreds of shoppers at an outdoor weekly market were swept to their deaths, but reluctantly agreed to a government request to bypass stricken areas controlled by Tamil Tiger rebels.

The Tigers, who have fought a 20-year war for Tamil independence from the Sinhalese-dominated south, invited Annan to tour the northern province. But government officials said they couldn't guarantee Annan's safety there.

"I'm concerned about everyone with need in the humanitarian situation," Annan said. "But I'm also a guest of the government, and we'll go where we agreed we'll go."

With volunteers and rescue workers reaching more remote areas, still more dead were found. Indonesian authorities raised their death toll estimate by nearly 3,000 to more than 100,000 and braced for tens of thousands more homeless than it expected.



Passing a tug boat washed up on a road by the massive tsunamis, a young girl carries supplies back to her village Saturday, just outside the capital of Aceh province in northwest Indonesia. The only road linking coastal cities on Sumatra was turned into an obstacle course by the tsunamis, complicating aid deliveries.

'An entirely different mission'

U.S. Marines help clear debris in Sri Lanka

BY CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA

The Associated Press

HIKKADUWA, Sri Lanka — Lt. Col. Edmund Bowen is a seasoned Marine who has served in the Persian Gulf and Somalia. But he now finds himself playing the role of peacetime aid worker in Sri Lanka's tsunami-ravaged areas.

"This is a stable country. This is an entirely different mission," said Bowen, one of 54 Marines clearing debris Saturday near this tourist town in southern Sri Lanka. None carried weapons or wore body armor. Instead of helmets, they donned caps.

The crew, based in Okinawa, Japan, is among 250 Marines sent by the 9th Engineer Support Battalion to take part in the massive relief effort in southern Sri Lanka. The USS Duluth was expected to arrive in a day or two with another 116 troops from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Bowen said.

"Marines are compassionate. We fight by the laws of war. If we turn on our kinder side, we bring a tremendous amount of speed and capability to a relief operation," Bowen said.

The assistance is part of a regional effort by the U.S. military, which is also flying supplies to survivors in Aceh, the Indonesian province near the epicenter of the quake that triggered the tsunami.

On Saturday, Bowen and his crew chose to start work in the village of Pitivella, which lost 16 of its 150 residents to the waves.

Photographs, fishing nets, bicycle wheels and slabs of concrete lay in the sand, as former residents watched the American bulldozer lumber over piles of rubble.

"It's good that the Marines are here. The damage is so bad that we can't do it alone," said D.V. Chaturanga, who lost his grandmother and his home. Other bystanders agreed, saying the U.S. forces were welcome.

With the help of a translator, Bowen talked to the community leaders, who asked that the debris be moved closer to the shoreline. Bowen said it was unsafe, saying another big wave would fling the rubble. But he agreed to their request when villagers said they had no plans to rebuild their homes in the same place because the government had forbidden it.

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Ragged survivors flock to Indonesian town

BY DENIS GRAY
The Associated Press

CALANG, Indonesia — Not a single building is left standing in Calang, where the tsunami killed 80 percent of the residents.

But the population is even higher now than before the disaster as weary survivors with little more than the clothes on their backs trudge in from the countryside for help.

Two weeks after walls of water flattened wide swaths of Indonesia's Sumatra island, people still are emerging from isolated villages, looking hungry and haunted by their experience.

Calang used to be a government center, about 55 miles south-east of Banda Aceh, before the tsunami flattened it, so it has become a natural magnet for refugees. While they are finding little

80% of Calang population died but stragglers coming in

more standing than in their home communities, the relief effort is mushrooming here.

Two Indonesian navy amphibious vessels were pulled up on the beach Saturday among the wreckage of smashed boats. Hundreds of refugees lined up on the beach to go inside and unload supplies. The Indonesian military has set up two field hospitals, one with 50 beds, the other with 20.

"The tragedy was terrible, but considering this, the survivors here now are in pretty good shape," said Dr. Steve Wignall, an American who works for Family Health International and was making an on-the-ground assessment with several other aid workers.

He estimated the town's

pre-tsunami population at 5,000, but it was virtually wiped off the map, and only about 1,000 people survived.

"Some 6,000 refugees have come in from isolated communities, and one group had just straggled after walking 30 miles, he said.

U.S. helicopter pilot Lt. Fred Morrison of Hatley, Pa., flew in directly from the carrier USS Abraham Lincoln to distribute 4,200 pounds of water in plastic containers to three different sites, including Calang, where the only thing left of the houses were the foundations.

The second drop-off point was a small hillock set where there is now swampland. Refugees clinging to the outcrop came rushing

down when the helicopter landed. The rest of the water went to a stretch of road that hadn't been destroyed by the tsunami where about 100 villagers have set up camp.

As the chopper headed back to the Lincoln, the crew spotted about 20 people on a road frantically waving, so they made a steep descent. Overcoming the language barrier, the survivors made their hunger clear by pointing to their stomachs and mouths. With nothing left to give, the helicopter took off again, noting the location.

"We're going to get water and food and return," said Petty Officer Sean Bascom of Moorpark, California.

Helicopters from the Lincoln

carrier group delivered well over 125,000 pounds of food, water and other relief supplies, a record so far and way up from around 14,000 pounds on some early days, even though the same number of helicopters are being used.

"We figured out how to do it better," said Lt. Rory Dupont, who was in charge of flying at Banda Aceh airport as the helicopters took off.

At the end of the day, the helicopters were flying through monsoon rains and clouds.

The U.S. Navy said Saturday that 13,000 U.S. servicemen are now in Indonesia and its waters, along with 10 ships and more on the way.

The U.S. military has assets in the whole affected region worth \$20 billion and is incurring \$5.6 million a day in operating costs, it said.

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"It is my sincere hope that Richard's story will help others with an unfortunate past to become productive, responsible, and fulfilled adults."

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"It is my sincere hope that Richard's story will help others with an unfortunate past to become productive, responsible, and fulfilled adults." —Dave Pelzer, author of *Help Yourself*

The Pelzer family's secret life of fear and abuse was first revealed in Dave Pelzer's astonishing *New York Times* bestseller, *A Child Called 'It'*. Now, his brother, Richard B. Pelzer, delves even more deeply into the family history to share his own story of abuse and survival in this remarkable testament to the resilience of the human heart.

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Powell holds frank talk about AIDS with youths in Kenya

BY ANNE GEARAN
The Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya — Promiscuity and other risky sexual behavior must change to stop the spread of AIDS in Africa, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said Saturday.

Young Kenyans, including an 11-year-old girl, had a frank discussion with Powell about promiscuity, resistance to condoms and the cultural expectation that young girls will have sex with much older men.

"Those sorts of patterns of behavior have to change to protect young people," Powell told the gathering.

Powell is in Africa to attend a signing ceremony ending north-south fighting in Sudan. The two-decade-old conflict is Africa's longest-running civil war. Powell met with Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki after the AIDS round-table Saturday.

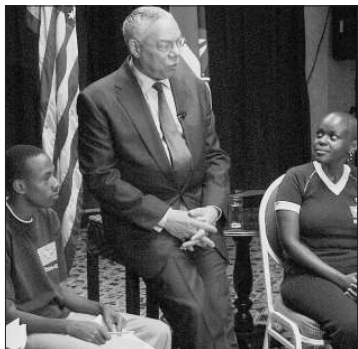
The Sudanese peace accord does not address the more recent fighting and refugee crisis in Sudan's western Darfur region, which Powell has called genocide. He planned to press Sudanese government leaders to resolve the Darfur crisis during the weekend meetings.

About 7 percent of adult Kenyans are infected with HIV or have AIDS, a rate much higher than western nations but lower than some countries in southern Africa where 20 percent or more of the population is infected.

"Africa, I think, for too long a period of time ignored the problem, looked the other way and said 'No, this isn't happening here,'" Powell said.

He criticized African countries, without naming them, that denied AIDS was a problem. Powell also noted former South African President Nelson Mandela's disclosure this week that his son died of complications from AIDS.

"More and more people are



U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell talks to young Kenyans about HIV and AIDS in Nairobi on Saturday.

willing to speak out about this and not hide," Powell said.

AIDS kills more than 600 people every day in South Africa. Mandela's successor, Thabo Mbeki, once denied knowing anyone who had died of the disease.

Powell sat in a circle with 19 Kenyans, most in their teens and 20s, who work to prevent HIV transmission among their peers. The discussion included blunt discussion of sexual and cultural practices, including what 24-year-old Boniface Mwendwa described as social pressure for young women to have sex with "people we call sugar daddies."

Older men are much more likely than young girls or women to carry the disease, and older men-to-younger women is a major source of transmission in Kenya and elsewhere.

"Are you getting through to the young people? Do you say you're square?" Powell asked.

Reception is better now than it used to be, Powell was told. Abstinence, faithfulness to a single partner and condom use are discussed much more openly than a few years ago, and more Kenyans are open about their HIV status. At least one of the young women who spoke to Powell on Saturday is HIV positive.

The anti-AIDS message starts early. Eleven-year-old Grace Gathoni is a member of the Brownie patrol at her elementary school. She came to the meeting dressed in her uniform.

"We learn about HIV and AIDS, and sexually transmitted diseases" at school, she said. "We are also taught to value our virginity, our education and our life."

Rescuers dig through train wreck

14th body recovered from Italy train crash

The Associated Press

BOLOGNINA DI CREVALCORE, Italy — Rescue workers on Saturday combed through the mangled remains of two trains that collided head-on in northern Italy, searching for bodies. A day after the crash, the death toll was at 14.

Fire department officials in Bologna said that several train cars were so badly crushed and ripped apart that they had still been unable to thoroughly inspect them more than 24 hours after the crash on the line between Bologna and Verona.

Officials on Saturday discovered a 14th body, an unidentified man, the fire department said. Rescue workers did not rule out finding others and expected to continue the search for at least one more day.

The passenger train collided with a freight train Friday in heavy fog in a field in Bolognina di Crevalcore, north of Bologna.

The force of the crash left one carriage standing on end nearly perpendicular with the tracks.

Dozens of people were injured, most of them lightly. The ANSA news agency said that five people were still hospitalized Saturday.

Investigators were studying the possibility that one train failed to stop at a red light and wait for the other train to pass on a second track, news reports said. But a prosecutor in Bologna heading the investigation declined to comment on the report.

"We have not been able to verify any hypotheses with the information we have had from station records," Prosecutor Enrico Cieri told TGI television news.



Firefighters work around the wreckage of a passenger train that collided head-on with a freight train in Bolognina di Crevalcore, near Bologna, northern Italy, on Friday. Officials said at least 14 people died and many more were injured.

The Civil Defense department said around 100 people were on board the passenger train, which was traveling south from Verona to Bologna. The freighter, which carried long metal rods, was headed north from Rome to San Zeno Falzano.

Though most train accidents in Italy are minor, the country has occasionally seen deadly crashes. The most recent was in July 2002, when a train from Palermo to Messina derailed in northeastern Sicily, killing at least eight people.

Kerry meets with Syrian leadership

The Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — Syria's president on Saturday assured Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., that he is interested in dialogue with Washington to improve strained relations between the countries, Syria's official news agency reported.

President Bashar Assad "underscored the importance of dialogue between the two sides over all issues under discussion, especially those of common interest," SANA said. It did not elaborate.

The former Democratic presidential candidate, who arrived in Damascus on Friday, met for two hours with Assad before meeting separately with Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa.

In both meetings, the talks centered on the situation in Iraq and how to prevent militants from moving from Syria to Iraq.

Kerry's visit comes amid strained U.S.-Syrian relations, particularly over accusations by American and Iraqi interim government officials that Damascus is doing too little to stop border infiltration. Washington also accuses Syria of backing Palestinian militant groups opposed to Israel.

Syria denies both claims but says it can't fully control its long, porous border with Iraq and regards Palestinian militants as fighters opposed to Israel's illegal

occupation of Arab territories.

A few months ago, Washington imposed sanctions on Syria under an act accusing Damascus of seeking weapons of mass destruction, a charge Syria denies, and hosting Palestinian groups Washington deems terrorist.

In September, the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution calling on Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon and dismant-

le the Syrian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah guerrilla group.

SANA said Kerry's talks with Assad included ways of boosting U.S.-Syrian relations in all fields, combating terrorism and the need for making the Middle East region free from all weapons of mass destruction.

Referring to this month's elections in Iraq, Assad stressed the importance of conducting the voting in "a democratic climate and with the participation of all Iraqi people in order to ensure Iraq's unity, independence and sovereignty."

The Assad-Kerry meeting, which was also attended by al-Sharaa, also stressed the importance of achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East in order "to establish security and stability in the region," SANA said.

Kerry arrived from Iraq, where he met U.S. troops in the volatile northern city of Mosul.

Fans in Germany can't help falling in love with the King

Birthday bash marks Elvis' 70th birthday

BY MELISSA EDDY

The Associated Press

BAD NAUHEIM, Germany — German Elvis Presley fans, clad in jean jackets, hats and T-shirts bearing the name of the King, flocked to this spa town to celebrate his 70th birthday with a series of shows and events.

Organized by local authorities and the local Elvis Presley Association, the events marking his birthday on Saturday included a Las Vegas show, a gospel concert and walking tours of places the singer lived from October 1958 through February 1960 while stationed here as a soldier — his only residence outside the United States.

"His voice was magic: there was so much soul, so much heart in it," said Isolde Sultenmeyer, a classical musician from Cologne.

Sultenmeyer, now retired, was lucky enough to secure a room Friday in the art deco Gruenewald Hotel where Presley lived upon arriving in Germany. Complaints from other residents that his rehearsing was disruptive forced him eventually to find his own house.

She was one of several fans who gathered Friday to walk in the footsteps of the

man many Germans credit with bringing rock 'n' roll to Europe.

An exhibit at Germany's national museum, Haus der Geschichte, or History House, in the former West German capital of Bonn also commemorates the singer's unique roll in the history of music here.

Included in the exhibit, which runs until Feb. 27, are countless artifacts gathered by Claus-Kurt Ilge, including a tape recorder and dozens of albums that Presley gave to him before returning to the United States.

Ilge has been instrumental in raising Bad Nauheim's profile as "Germany's home of Elvis," but argues the city could still do more. For years, he says, he has crusaded to have the street in front of the Gruenewald Hotel renamed in honor of Presley, but local politicians have been reluctant to do so.

Ulrich Schlichthaefer, head of the city's tourism office, says officials are only now realizing their city's connection to the King can raise its profile.

"Out of more than 100 spa towns in Germany, we are the only one that can claim a 20th-century artist resided here," Schlichthaefer said. "Many of them have connections to Mozart, Beethoven or Brahms, but only we have Elvis."



GUS SCHUETTLER/Stars and Stripes

Sgt. Elvis Presley poses for a photo as he signs autographs for local residents in Friedberg, Germany, in February 1960. Presley was awaiting his discharge from the Army the following month after two years of service. In honor of the King's 70th birthday Saturday, German fans flocked to celebrations in Bad Nauheim, where Elvis spent much of his time.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Canadian cows' range of motion
The Tri-City Herald,
Kennewick, Wash.

It's almost time to let the cows come home, the Bush administration has decided. Canadian cows, that is.

The decision by the U.S. government to reopen its borders in March to certain categories of Canadian cattle is a good move, backed with an abundance of caution.

The Bush administration is expected to proceed with lifting the ban even after Canada said that it had found a suspected new case of mad cow disease. No part of the 10-year-old dairy cow in question has entered the United States.

The ban, which sprang from a May 2003 case of mad cow disease in Alberta, has outlived its time. It may have ended sooner, if it were not for the United States' first case of mad cow disease, discovered in a Holstein from Mabton almost exactly one year ago. The Mabton cow was traced back to a Canadian herd.

The U.S. government has repeatedly petitioned other governments to lift their bans on importing our beef. A reciprocal arrangement with Canada seems only fair ...

The Agriculture Department says effective measures are in place to prevent and to remove spongiform encephalopathy. ... With safeguards in place, it's time to renew the transatlantic and border cooperation of U.S. and Canadian cattle producers.

Russians weigh freedom, order
Chicago Tribune

Five years ago, the first democratically elected president of Russia, Boris Yeltsin, sent his countrymen into the world's headlines. Turning to his hand-picked prime minister, Vladimir Putin, Yeltsin gave him the keys to the Kremlin and urged him to "rule" over Russia.

Russia, as that new year of 2000 dawned, desperately needed care. ...

For their part, Russians have willingly traded in their unruly 1990s-style freedom for a chance at greater domestic security. Putin's approval ratings remain high.

Americans can understand that desire for freedom from terrorism. Though this country has not suffered a repeat of Sept. 11, 2001, Russia has been rocked by apartment bombings, blown-up airplanes, suicide bombers and the horrific hostage-siege in Beslan that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of children. ...

It is no great surprise that the Russian people are willing to give Putin a stronger hand. Russians submitted a strong, autocratic leaders through hundreds of years of rule by the czars and 70 years of communism. Putin was stepping in the secretive ways of the Soviet KGB and his anti-democratic tendencies were apparent early on. He promised Russians stability and economic growth — both were in short order five years ago. ...

For free trumpets and a strong hand. The state is becoming more powerful with the promise that it will make the people more secure. Centuries of Russian history argue that this is a false promise.

Where is Putin taking Russia? Certainly not to the re-creation of the Soviet empire. ... But the chances that Russia will develop into a free, prosperous and modern democracy seem to be slipping away.

Insurgents won't rock Iraq vote
The Poughkeepsie (N.Y.) Journal

President Bush is holding firm that Iraqi elections must take place at the end of this month. It's the best time to take, for now. For all the talk of problems with the distribution of ballots in such a chaotic chi-



mate, delaying elections could exacerbate fears the United States isn't committed to removing its troops as soon as possible. Many Iraqi factions, and members of the world community, still have great distrust about U.S. intentions in Iraq. More importantly, the Bush administration realizes the sooner elections are held, the faster it will be able to withdraw troops and let the Iraqis run their own country. ...

Free and safe elections are, of course, the key to success in Iraq. The insurgents are mustering all they can to derail the effort, but the interim Iraqi government must try to move forward. ...

For their part, U.S. authorities are ramping up efforts to make sure military vehicles operating in Iraq have the proper armor to protect troops against attacks. And the military also will boost U.S. troop strength in the short term, adding about 12,000 to 138,000 already serving in Iraq.

Those efforts are essential. The United States also has to make a long-term investment by providing better training for Iraqi security forces.

It's still anyone's guess whether the January elections can be carried out. ... But it's clear delaying the vote would be a huge victory for the insurgents. ... That is reason enough to stick with the timetable for now.

U.N. 'stingy' in appreciation
The Gazette, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Maybe "stingy" means something different in Norwegian than it does in English. That might explain how comments made by Jan Egeland, the Norwegian who serves as emergency relief coordinator for the United Nations, suggesting that the United States and other countries were being less-than-generous in responding to the tsunami disaster in Asia, could have been "misinterpreted."

Egeland conducted the Dec. 27 press conference at the United Nations in English, however. "It is beyond me why are we so stingy, really," he said. "If the foreign assistance of many countries now is 0.1 or 0.2 percent of their gross national income. ... I don't think that is very generous." That provoked a strong response from Secretary of State Colin Powell — "The United States is not stingy," he said — and led to some "clarifications" from Egeland the next day, claiming he'd been misinterpreted.

The United States contributes roughly 0.13 percent of its Gross Domestic Product each year to development aid — that excludes food aid (of which we are by far the world's biggest provider), funds for rebuild-

ing Iraq and Afghanistan and private donations. That's less than the 0.7 percent of GDP the United Nations suggests we contribute, but, given that the U.S. economy is the world's largest, it's still a generous expenditure — and can't be called "stingy" in any language.

Voyeur has See: Seeing is believing
The Times-Picayune, New Orleans

A federal law that now makes it illegal to surreptitiously film or photograph another person should help thwart the abuse of advances in technology that have made taking pictures effortless.

Small video cameras can be installed virtually anywhere, and many mobile phones now come equipped with cameras. They've become the tools of the perverted who have sneaked them into gym locker rooms and public restrooms.

The law that was signed by President Bush applies only to voyeuristic acts committed on federal property. Proponents of the legislation cited examples of inconspicuous cameras being used to capture images of people in dressing rooms and showers on Navy warships.

That's despicable. But until this new legislation was passed, there was no law that made such actions illegal. That gap between what we know to be wrong and what we've deemed legal was similar to a loophole Louisiana had until recently.

Susan Wilson, a Monroe woman, discovered in 1998 that a neighbor had been secretly recording her and her family's private moments.

When she went to authorities, however, she discovered that even though in-person voyeurism was illegal, videotaped voyeurism had not been addressed.

Wilson's complaints led to the passage of a video voyeurism bill in Louisiana that made the crime a felony. Since then, more than 30 other states also have taken a stance against video voyeurism.

An assault on fair punishment
The Plain Dealer, Cleveland

Todd Bertuzzi has gotten a break he does not deserve from a provincial court in British Columbia. Bertuzzi is the Vancouver Canucks hockey star who, in the closing seconds of a lopsided loss in March, viciously attacked Steve Moore of the Colorado Avalanche from behind.

Three days before Christmas, Bertuzzi accepted a very nice present from prosecu-

tors: By pleading guilty to assault causing bodily harm and agreeing to pay a \$500 fine and perform 80 hours of community service, he can walk away with no criminal record after a year. A hearing to ratify the deal was arranged so hastily that Moore could not travel from his home in Massachusetts to face his assailant in court.

Had he appeared, Moore might have talked about what the attack meant to him. Almost 10 months later, he still suffers from headaches, memory loss and mood swings. He cannot skate or work out. ...

At its best, professional hockey is a game of speed and grace. But one reason that so few Americans follow it — and even fewer fans' refusal to take this year's shutdown — is the NHL's setback to this an unbending stand against the eye-for-an-eye violence represented by Bertuzzi's assault.

Oust Annan for his inaction
The Tribune-Democrat,
Johnstown, Pa.

It's time for America to sever ties. We aren't prepared to call U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan a crook. He may simply be an incompetent. But either way, Annan has no right to be given an additional two years in his prestigious position. ...

There was the U.S.'s oil-for-food scandal in Iraq. As Nile Gardiner of The Heritage Foundation noted in a recent column, it was "the biggest scandal in the history of the United Nations and the biggest financial fraud of modern times." He wrote that the U.N. program was supposed to help the people of Iraq, but instead enriched their corrupt leaders.

Charles Duelfer, a U.S. weapons inspector, wrote that Annan's hand-picked director of the program supposedly received a voucher from Saddam Hussein for 13 million barrels of oil. Some humanitarian program that. ... Then there was the scandal in the Congo involving U.N. personnel and peacekeepers. Gardiner wrote that the U.N. is accused of human rights violations against refugees "on a scale that dwarfs the Abu Ghraib scandal." Annan even accepted organizational responsibility for that debacle. ...

As a leading financial sponsor of U.N. operations, the United States should demand the immediate removal of Annan. If President Bush does not have the fortitude to do it, Congress should, by cutting off all U.S. payments to the U.N.

In recent years, the U.N. has become a forum for strong expressions of anti-American sentiment. It is time that the United States stopped paying for its own revilement.

Too much MTV?

WA LAKE STEVENS — Someone in the Census Bureau may be watching a little too much MTV.

Bevis Lake, a 5.7-acre body of water in a forested area about 25 miles northeast of Seattle, is now appearing in Bureau records with a different name: Butthead Lake.

Those two names — Bevis and Butthead — are almost identical to the 1990s MTV cartoon show "Beavis and Butt-head," which featured a pair of slacker teenagers who watch music videos and make bad jokes.

Someone at the Census Bureau must have gotten bored and made a joke out of naming the lake, said Ken Brown, a land surveyor with the state Department of Natural Resources.

It's not unusual for small lakes in one-of-the-way places to have different names because of variations in county, state or other official records, but there are no such indications in this case, Brown said.

Shrine can stay

MA PEPPERELL — A judge has ruled that a man can keep the illuminated, three-story shrine in his backyard that he says he was instructed to build by the Virgin Mary.

James G. Sullivan, 85, lives in this rural town on the Massachusetts-New Hampshire border ordered Noel Dube, 85, to remove the shrine in 1999, saying he didn't have the proper permits. Neighbors had complained about its size and the thousands of visitors it attracted annually.

Instead, Dube expanded it, adding a 30-foot painting of Jesus and a 24-foot illuminated cross to an existing 20-foot mural of Our Lady of Fatima.

Last week, Middlesex Superior Court Judge Kenneth Fishman ruled that the shrine can stay.

Southern speaking

NC RALEIGH — A television documentary debuting this week examines the dialects and language of North Carolina, from the "hot toide" of Cherokee Island residents to Cherokee elders who converse in their native language.

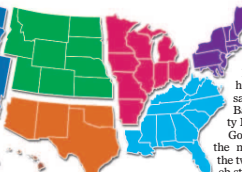
In addition to examining the different dialects, the UNC-TV documentary "Voices of North Carolina" also explores what they mean to people's identity. The film is a companion to "Do You Speak American?" a documentary about this country's speech that aired nationwide this week on PBS.

Wolf watch in north

ID COEUR D'ALENE — Wolf sightings are increasing across northern Idaho and the governor is expected to ask the federal government for statewide control of the wolf population, Idaho Fish and Game Director Steve Huffaker said.

Interior Secretary Gale Norton announced this week a new rule giving Idaho and Montana more authority to manage wolves inside a federally designated recovery area. But more wolf sightings are being reported north of Interstate 90, outside of the recovery area.

Gov. Dirk Kempthorne is expected to send a letter to Washington, D.C., later this week asking for



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

statewide control, Huffaker said.

Mistrial for doctor

OH NORWALK — A judge declared a mistrial in a medical negligence case against a physician after the doctor came to the aid of a juror who passed out during opening statements.

The defendant, Dr. Joseph Carver, told the 74-year-old juror Wednesday that it appeared he had a heart flutter that momentarily prevented oxygen from getting to his brain and caused the blackout.

The juror was taken to a hospital for tests.

No new trial date has been set. Carver, an obstetrician and gynecologist, is being sued for \$3 million by a couple who say their newborn daughter was dropped on the floor of a delivery room in 2000 while under Carver's care.

Fake cop shoots man

NY FRANKLIN SQUARE — The manager of a Long Island bank was shot dead as he drove home from work by a man posing as a police officer, authorities said.

James Gottlieb, 49, was driving on Sention Boulevard in Franklin Square at about 7 p.m. Wednesday when a black SUV with flashing lights pulled him over, Nassau

County police said.

When he got out of his car, Gottlieb was confronted by a man who claimed to be a police officer and ordered him to get on the ground, said Detective Sgt. Dennis Barry, of the Nassau County Police Homicide Squad.

Gottlieb demanded to see the man's identification, and the two began to argue. Gottlieb started walking toward the front door of a nearby house, and the man posing as a police officer fired three shots, striking Gottlieb in the arm and leg, police said. He died at Mercy Hospital in Rockville Centre at 8:14 p.m.

The gunman fled the scene and there were no arrests.

Defendant bites bailiff

TX FORT WORTH — A defendant flew into a rage in a Fort Worth courtroom and bit a bailiff after a judge announced he had been found guilty of indecency with a child Wednesday, witnesses said.

Before biting the bailiff, Lonnie B. Howard threw a water pitcher across the courtroom.

"We think he was trying to hit the victim's family," Terry Grisham of the Tarrant County Sheriff's Office told KDFW television station in Dallas-Fort Worth.

Howard then lunged at the family, biting the face of one of the bailiffs who tried to restrain him. Officials say he will be charged with aggravated assault on an officer.

Oil spill in tunnel

VA HAMPTON — A tractor-trailer lost its fuel tank while heading westbound through the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel on Monday night, spilling more than 100 gallons of diesel fuel and closing the tunnel to traffic for nearly two hours.

The incident happened at 7:42 p.m., spokeswoman Tiffany Elliott of the Virginia Department of Transportation said. It did not involve any other vehicles and no one was injured, she said, but specifics about how the fuel tank came loose were unclear.

"It seems as though it just dropped off the truck," Elliott said. The amount of fuel in the tank also was not immediately clear, but Elliott said there were indications the tank was full, holding as many as 140 gallons of fuel.

Charges in model murder

PA YEADON — A man was charged Wednesday with raping and killing an aspiring teenage model, then cutting up her body, putting it in a steel drum and burning it with help from an acquaintance.

Delaware County District Attorney G. Michael Green said he will consider seeking the death penalty for Lamar Haymes, 29.

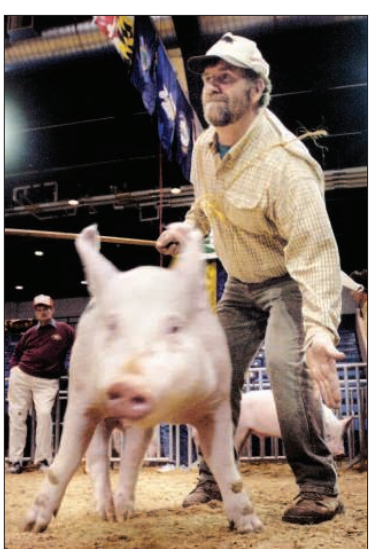
Haymes was charged with kidnapping, rape, first-degree murder, abuse of a corpse and other counts in the death of 15-year-old Deanna Wright McIntosh, who left home early last month after an argument with her mother.

Authorities allege Haymes raped and killed Wright McIntosh at a house in Lansdowne just blocks from her family's Yeadon home.



Sky diving

Roofer Ken Buchalski wipes sweat from his brow while working atop a roof as the Jantzen Girl mannequin seems to dive out of a deep blue sky in Daytona Beach, Fla.



Prize pig

Arlie Cornbower of New Freedom, Pa., guides his "barrow," a male pig, past the judge during the test market hog contest at the 89th annual Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg, Pa.



Hop, skip and a jump

Anna Xine skips happily as temperatures rose to the mid 60's in Palmer Square in Princeton, N.J.



Reflections of the past A portion of Philadelphia's Boathouse Row is shown at night. The rowhouse lights, a fixture since the 1976 Bicentennial celebrations, and not revamped since the mid-eighties, were later turned off as part of a plan to re-do the lighting with light-emitting diodes instead of standard light bulbs.



Big hat to fill Nine-month-old Aubrianna Taylor tries on the hat of her uncle, Washington State Trooper Charles Bates, of Key Center, Wash., prior to Bates taking part in graduation ceremonies in Olympia, Wash.



A splash of color Japanese Apricot trees are blooming in the Sara P. Duke Gardens in Durham, N.C., adding a bright touch to the January monochromatic scene.



On a fishin' mission Tamarion Botley, 4, casts a fishing line near a foot bridge across Ellen Trout Memorial Lake in Lufkin, Texas.

Men get big money jobs

NC RALEIGH — A study by the state personnel office found that North Carolina employs almost as many women as men in state government, but women fill most low-wage jobs. Women make up 48.9 percent of the state work force but hold 71.5 percent of the jobs in the bottom 10 pay grades. Men hold 75 percent of the jobs in the top 15 pay grades.

Scholarship needs funds

SD PIERRE — Legislators will be asked to find \$500,000 to fully fund a new scholarship program that's more popular than expected. It pays \$5,000 in tuition over four years to qualifying high school graduates for any college or vocational school in the state. The Legislature last year appropriated enough money to fund two years of the program for 650 students, but \$26 qualified.

Suspect killed

NJ CAMDEN — A man killed during an attempted robbery was responsible for a string of rapes in a downtown neighborhood, authorities said Wednesday. Camden County Prosecutor Vincent P. Sarubbi said the state police DNA lab confirmed Antonio Diaz Reyes, 32, was the rapist in the recent attacks of a high school student, a university student and a store worker.

The rapes in November and December were brazen daylight attacks at knife-point. Investigators decided to check Reyes' DNA because the would-be robber's method was similar to that used in the sexual assaults.

Authorities said Reyes entered the Camden City Wireless and Fishing Supply store Friday afternoon and held the store owner's wife at knife-point. Owner Ngoc Le, 28, grabbed his own gun and told Reyes he would let him live if he released his wife, authorities said. Reyes refused and Le opened fire, fatally hitting Reyes in the head.

Budget request add up

MT HELENA — The Legislature's chief budget analyst warned that while the state appears to have plenty of money for the 2005 Legislature to spend, the demands for the cash are quickly eating it away. School funding needs and a state employee pay raise easily could drain what remains of an "unprecedented" \$293 million budget surplus, Clayton Schenck said.

Funny paperwork

TX DALLAS — An internal investigation has found that Dallas County Sheriff's Department officials conspired to falsify training records for a civilian reserve deputy so he could patrol county highways unsupervised and make DWI arrests.

Former Sheriff Jim Bowles, days before leaving office last week, reversed conclusions of the investigation and ordered them reclassified as "unfounded," shutting down the case before he left his job.

According to an internal memorandum, the department's internal affairs office had enough evidence to prove that Deputy Arlo Mike

Baker, Deputy Thomas "Buck" Fortner and reserve Deputy Cary Platt "conspired to manufacture fraudulent official Sheriff's Department records."

Platt, a real estate developer, denied the allegations Wednesday.

Gargantuan gator

FL MIAMI — Residents could be forgiven for doing a double-take when an alligator weighing more than 400 pounds was yanked out of a downtown creek — so big it had to be hoisted out by a fire truck.

The 12-foot alligator was discovered in Wagner Creek, about 16 miles from the Everglades, in the shadow of two major hospital complexes and around the corner from a veterans' medical center, a court house, a county jail and government office buildings.

It was "about the last place you'd expect to see an alligator of any size," said trapper Todd Hardwick. Alligators are much more common in suburban canals and lakes.

The alligator likely swam downtown years ago, when it was smaller, and lived in the canal system draining the Miami Civic Center, emerging only to snatch raccoons and opossums from the bank, Hardwick said.

Charges dropped

TX SAN ANTONIO — Child-indecentcy charges have been dropped against Federal Administrative Law Judge Forrest Elmo Stewart. A teenage accuser several months ago admitted that she lied about having sex with Stewart, 78. District Attorney Susan Reed cited poor cooperation between federal officials and investigators in determining what really happened.

Salty wreck

TN ERWIN — With winter's full wrath still to be felt, Unicoi County is already having a cold-weather crisis: It lost all three of its salt trucks during a single traffic accident.

"We have snow plows and graders to do the winter road work, but we'll have to probably seek help from the state in getting road salt spread on county roads," said Terry Haynes, the county's highway department superintendent. While traveling Dec. 22 to get more salt, the trucks collided with a tractor-trailer. icy conditions were blamed for the accident.

The lost trucks were valued at about \$275,000. While they are fully covered with insurance, it takes time to go through the insurance process," Haynes said.

War on homelessness

MN DULUTH — Mayor Herb Bergson wants to end homelessness in the city within 10 years. In his state of the city address, Bergson said the city will team up with a local food bank to start a fund for Duluth residents who go hungry. "It's going to be very challenging to have the long-term resources that will sustain this," said Greg Owen, who has researched homelessness for the St. Paul-based Wilder Research Center. He said homelessness is a complex issue.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

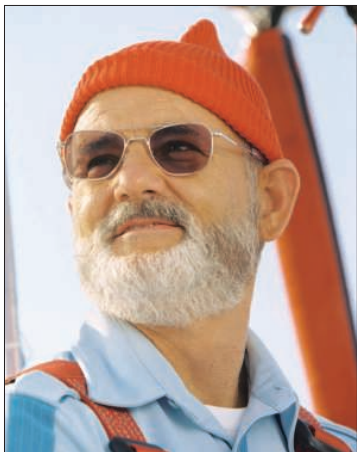
SPECIAL TO STARS AND STRIPES

Walter Scott's **Personality** **PARADE**

Want the facts? Opinions? Truth? Write Walter Scott, Box 5001, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10163-5001. Full name will be used unless otherwise requested. Volume of mail makes personal replies impossible.



Universal Studios



© Touchstone Pictures

Between "Saturday Night Live" alumni Eddie Murphy, left, in the depths of a fat suit in "The Nutty Professor," and Bill Murray, above, in "The Life Aquatic," Murray wins "most successful" by a narrow margin.

QI've noticed that many of today's young stars — Jessica Alba, Kate Hudson, Britney Spears — wear too-long trousers. Is this a new fashion? — Tina Peters, Florence, Ariz.
AIt's a drag, but those touching-the-ground slacks go hand in hand with the latest Hollywood fashion statement for men — hanging shirttails. Don't worry: This too shall pass.

QI read that former "Cheers" star Shelley Long was in a hospital after attempting suicide. How is she doing? — Tom Jones, South Plainfield, N.J.

ALong, 55, is back home, surrounded by family and friends. She had to deal with the recent breakup of her 22-year marriage to stockbroker Bruce Tyson, but her reps insist it was a bad reaction to an accidental overdose of a painkiller — not a suicide attempt. Shelley asked us to tell her fans she sends "heartfelt thanks for all their good wishes."

QHas anyone won a Medal of Honor, our highest award for valor on the battlefield, for service in Iraq? — Herman Heyn, Baltimore

ANot yet. Our sources say two men who served in Iraq have been recommended, but the approval process normally takes two to three years. In fact, the most recent recipient, Army Capt. Humbert "Rocky" Versace, died in Vietnam in 1965 and was not awarded the medal until 2002 — after his records were upgraded. Cited for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity," Versace was first recommended in 1969.

QIf the shareholders win their suit against some of the 15 directors of The Walt Disney Co. who hired Michael Ovitiz in 1995 and fired him with a \$140 million golden parachute in 1996, who will have to pay? — Ross Denton, Colorado Springs, Colo.

AThe members of the board of directors named in the suit, including Ovitiz himself and CEO Michael Eisner. If the judge rules that they breached their duty. Any damages paid by them (or by their liability insurers) would go to The Walt Disney Co. — which, in effect, belongs to the shareholders.



Scraps Howard News Service

American speed skater and heartthrob Apolo Ohno has been busy training for next year's Olympic Games in Italy.

QWhat has speed skater Apolo Ohno been up to since he won a gold and a silver medal at the 2002 Winter Olympics? — Melissa Sanchez, West Valley City, Utah

ATraining for the 2006 Olympics in Italy. Ohno, 22, leads the standings on the World Cup short-track speed-skating circuit. "I've been consistent this year, medaling in every single distance," he tells us. Off the ice, he donates his time to children's charities, including Make-a-Wish, and is negotiating with sponsors for lucrative endorsement deals.

QYou said Bill Murray had the most illustrious career of all "Saturday Night Live" alumni. Where does Eddie Murphy fall on your scale? — Dee Moore, Cleveland

AA close second. Murphy's credits include a number of A-box-office blockbusters: "Trading Places," "Coming to America," "48 Hrs.," "Beverly Hills Cop," "The Nutty Professor," "Dr. Doolittle" and the donkey's voice in "Shrek" and "Shrek 2." Eddie, 43, has made more money, but we still think Bill is a more versatile actor.

QIs Deanna Durbin, the child star of the '30s, still alive? — Flori von Paternoss, West Hartford, Conn.

AYes. Now 83, Durbin lives near Paris in Neauphle-le-Chateau. Her third husband, French director Charles Henri David, died in 1999 after 48 years of marriage. The actress-singer (born Edna Mae Durbin) got a special Oscar in 1939 with Mickey Rooney but quit Hollywood in 1950 and hasn't granted a face-to-face interview since.

QAny chance Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick, stars of "The Producers" on Broadway and film, will team up again? — Julie Ann D., Las Vegas

AThere's been a lot of talk on Broadway that Emanuel Azenberg, who has produced many of Neil Simon's plays, will bring the two back for a revival of Simon's "The Odd Couple." But until Lane, 48, and Broderick, 42, sign on the dotted line, says Azenberg, that's all it is — a lot of talk.

QAny details on the girl who recently played a young Linda Ronstadt on NBC's "American Dreams"? — Leslie Sykes, Seal Beach, Calif.

AJoJo Levesque, 14, began belting out songs at 2. "Music means everything to me," says the eighth-grader, who's been home-schooled in New Jersey. She quit public school when her success led to jealousy among her classmates, explains JoJo, adding: "I feel that going through hard times gave me something to write about." She penned three tunes on her self-titled 2004 CD.

YOUR MONEY

Tax time coming—watch for those forms

Start preparing papers now, experts say

BY EILEEN ALT POWELL

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Among the credit card bills, post-holiday sales flyers and junk mail this month will be a number of letters that consumers don't want to save. These contain the W-2s, 1099s and 1088s, and other forms Americans need for their annual April taxpaying ritual.

Eric Tyson, a financial counselor and co-author of "Taxes for Dummies," suggests consumers set up a file folder or large envelope to collect the incoming tax documents so they're ready when the time comes to fill out income tax forms that are due April 15.

"When it's all in one place, it's easier to do your taxes," Tyson said.

Taxpayers trying to pull their papers together at the last minute can make mistakes or miss valuable deductions, he said.

In fact, a study by the Government Accountability Office found that more than 2 million Americans overpaid their federal taxes by an average of \$438 because they claimed the standard deduction rather than writing off items such as mortgage interest payments, state and local taxes, and charitable contributions.

Tyson also suggests consumers "take at least a glance" at the incoming tax documents to make sure they're correct.

"You don't want to wait until April 15, because you won't be able to get errors corrected in time to get your return filed on time," he said.

The form that's the most important at tax time for workers is the W-2, which employers provide. W-2s contain information on workers' total earnings, as well as the amount of federal, state and local taxes that have been withheld.

Most employers distribute W-2s at their workplaces, but some mail them to workers as well as to former employees.

Other forms likely to show up in mailboxes in coming weeks are 1099-INT forms, on which financial institutions report the amount of interest paid to consumers, and 1099-DIV forms, where dividend earnings are recorded.

Financial institutions send copies of many of these tax forms directly to the Internal Revenue Service, said Lennie Gary, a committee chairman with the National As-

sociation of Enrolled Agents, based in Washington, D.C. Enrolled agents are licensed by the government to assist consumers with their taxes.

"The government uses these third parties to verify many sources of income," Gary said. That should help motivate accurate reporting by consumers, he added.

Gary, who works as a tax manager with American Express Tax and Business Services in Mountain View, Calif., said workers who haven't received their W-2 forms by the first week in February should call their employers and ask when they will be available.

"They go astray more often than you'd think," he said.

"People move, change addresses, but the W-2 goes out to the previous address."

If a company has gone out of business, workers generally can use their final pay stubs to prepare their taxes, he said.

Peggy Munro, an enrolled agent in Montpelier, Vt., who also wrote sections for the "Taxes for Dummies" book, pointed out that there are a variety of 1099 forms that taxpayers may need.

In addition to those with information about taxable interest and dividend payments, there are 1099s used to report sales of real estate and stocks, pension and Individual Retirement Account distributions, and Social Security. Other 1099 forms are used to report unemployment compensation or state and local tax refunds.

While most of the forms that arrive in the mail have to do with income, there are some that will be of help to consumers who itemize their taxes and claim deductions.

The most common form in this category is the 1098, which financial institutions issue to report the interest that consumers paid on their home mortgages, she said. Some 1098s also show real estate taxes paid from the homeowner's escrow account. There's also a 1098-E, an interest statement for those paying back student loans.

"People should also expect to receive statements for charitable donations," Munro said. "For donations of \$250 or more, the charity is required to give you a receipt. Many [charities] don't mail them out until January of the following year."

She added: "If you've made those contributions and haven't received receipts, get on the phone and ask for them. A canceled check is no longer proof for the deduction."

Taxpayers trying to pull their papers together at the last minute can make mistakes or miss valuable deductions.



THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS/GETTY

Some lower-income workers not receiving credit

The Dallas Morning News

The concept is almost beyond comprehension: The Internal Revenue Service actually wants to give people money.

The IRS wants more eligible taxpayers to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit, which is designed to ease the tax burden on the working poor.

"It's not often that you hear the IRS is recruiting people to claim a credit," said David Williams, director of the EITC program at the IRS.

The most recent IRS figures show that 27 percent to 32 percent of all EITC claims had errors.

"We want everybody who qual-

ifies for the credit to claim the credit, but we don't want to pay out the dollars on this to those who don't qualify," said IRS Commissioner Mark W. Evans. "It helps lift people out of poverty, but it can't be subject to the higher error rate that it is and is not subject to criticism."

It comes down to educating taxpayers. If you're single with income below \$12,000, or married with children and income below \$36,000, it's worth checking into.

There are pitfalls to watch out for.

All you have to do to claim the credit is fill out a federal tax return along with the worksheet that tells you how much your

credit will be. That sounds simple, but unfortunately it's pretty complicated.

Nationally, 21 million low-income families qualified for the credit last year and received \$36 billion. But IRS studies indicate that millions more are eligible but fail to claim the credit.

David Williams, director of the program at the Internal Revenue Service, said slightly more than 75 percent of eligible taxpayers claim the credit.

More than 90 percent of eligible mothers with children claim the credit, he said. But you don't have to have a child to claim the credit.

The maximum credit is \$4,300 for a family with two or more chil-

dren. When the tax credit exceeds the amount of taxes owed, it results in a refund.

"The EITC lifts millions of families above the poverty line every year," Williams said. "It becomes a supplement to their earned income."

Even if you don't owe taxes, be sure to file an income tax return. That's the only way you can claim the credit.

But make sure you qualify, because the IRS monitors the program closely for errors and fraud. The amount of the credit depends on your earned income, the number of children you have and your filing status.

To start, you should have earned

income from wages or self-employment.

"Review your circumstances over the past year," Williams said. "Don't guess whether you qualify."

The most common error is incorrectly claiming a "qualifying child," he said. You must have lived with your child for more than half the year.

"The rules for claiming a qualifying child are somewhat complicated," Williams said. "It's not a surprise that a number of people get them wrong."

For information on claiming the credit, go to the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov and download Publication 596, Earned Income Credit. You also may order a free copy by calling toll-free 1-800-829-3676.

YOUR MONEY

2nd airline lowers fares

American Airlines, the nation's largest carrier, is matching most of the sweeping changes Delta Air Lines made to its fare structure, which includes eliminating Saturday-night stay requirements and lowering last-minute fares, an industry source familiar with the move said Thursday.

After mimicking Delta's changes in some markets Wednesday evening, AMR Corp., American's parent company, was expected to file additional rate changes Thursday morning with the Airline Tariff Publishing Company system, according to the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The source would not say whether American planned to cap fares across the board, "there are some differences," the source said.

On Wednesday, Delta Air Lines Inc. cut its most expensive fares by as much as 50 percent and eliminated Saturday-night stays in an effort to woo business travelers and other last-minute ticket buyers.

The airline said no fare would be higher than \$499 one-way in coach class or \$599 one-way in first class under its new program. One analyst estimated that the fare changes, if mimicked by all other U.S. carriers, could reduce the industry's annual revenue by \$2 billion to \$3 billion a year.

From The Associated Press

Credit-impacts court score

Q: Until a few years ago, my late husband and I traveled a good deal and maintained a high limit on our credit cards. He has now passed away. I travel far less and no longer have a need for so much credit. I would like to have my limits reduced, but fear doing so would have a negative effect on my credit rating. Is this correct?

A: Lowering your credit limits may indeed hurt your credit score, the number lenders use to help gauge your creditworthiness. The scoring formula measures the gap between the credit you have and the amount you actually use. The wider that gap, the better.

But there is no way to determine in advance if the lowered credit limit will affect your score, according to Fair Isaac Corp., creator of the FICO credit score.

But the danger of lowering limits on a card or two may not be that severe if you don't use the cards that much and already have a high credit score — which is likely if you have a long credit history, are never late on your payments and don't max out your cards.

If you have reason to think your credit score may be on thin ice, on the other hand, it may be best to live with the higher limits as long as you are confident you can resist

the temptation to charge away.

Dear Liz: I'm an insurance professional responding to the reader who despaired because her husband's parents refused to do any estate planning for their business, which the parents have, which her husband runs. If the parents have any kind of a competent life insurance agent, the agent has probably been talking to them about these problems for a while.

It's possible the parents have already completed the estate planning but chose not to tell their son and daughter-in-law. This is very common, especially if they don't like the daughter-in-law or if there is marital discord. The parents also may not care whether the business continues or may plan to sell the business when they retire and let the son fend for himself.

A: If the parents are secretly planning to sell the business — either when they retire or at their deaths — they're contemplating the one course of action that may be even more unfair than having no plan at all.

Assuming the sale wouldn't

generate enough cash for the son to retire, he would face the daunting task of starting his work life over again at middle age. If he's devoted all of his energies to running the business, he may not have the contacts or the skills to make an easy transition.

If the parents were honest about their plans, he might have time to adequately prepare. Those preparations could, of course, involve leaving the family business, which is the outcome such secretive parents may be trying to avoid.

All this only underscores how right the daughter-in-law is to worry when no clear plans have been announced.

Here's another perspective: **Dear Liz:** As a certified public accountant, I have seen so many miserable scenarios of unnecessary expense and chaos that result from people's reluctance to plan for their deaths. Business owners can sometimes put off talking to the lawyer, but they usually have to talk to the accountant, since taxes need to be filed.

The son could enlist the accountant to help put the facts to the elderly parents. The accountant will be able to show a grim picture of what could be in store for the heirs and possibly the young spouse of the current owner.

The son needs to act, since this situation can only get worse.

A: That's an excellent suggestion. Many times a trusted third party can jump-start estate-planning discussions that have been stalled by family tensions, control issues, denial or procrastination.

Here's one more thought: **Dear Liz:** You recently had a query about how to deal with estate planning when a small-business owner is not ready to consider succession. In our area, too, universities have programs that can help with such issues, along with other topics specific to family-owned businesses. Other universities around the country have similar resources. In addition, the son could hire a consultant who specializes in family business programs, educators and advisors. Visit www.efi.org.

Liz Pulliam Weston is the author of "Your Credit Score: How to Fix, Improve and Protect the 3-Digit Number that Shapes Your Financial Future." Questions and comments can be sent to her at 3940 Laurel Canyon Blvd., #238, Studio City, CA 91604, or via her Web site, liz.pulliamweston.com. She regrets that she cannot respond personally to queries.

FRIDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES			
52-week	Low	High	Net
High	Low	High	Net
10,640.81	10,598.52	Dow Jones Industrial	10,640.81
3,628.38	2,143.46	Dow Jones Transportation	3,628.38
57.77	259.86	Dow Jones	57.77
7,713.18	6,211.33	NYSE Composite	7,713.18
1,156.41	1,156.41	NYSE	1,156.41
2,159.18	1,750.82	Nasdaq Composite	2,159.18
1,217.90	1,060.72	S&P 500	1,217.90
566.15	546.29	S&P MidCap	566.15
12,426.36	10,508.52	Wall Street	12,426.36

NYSE			
Most Active	(\$1 or more)	Net	High
Most Active	(\$1 or more)	Net	High
General	750.47	1.50	+0.1
United	240.03	24.30	+1.1
Merck	29.05	24.30	+1.1
United	11.40	10.10	+0.8
General	10.05	15.25	+1.2
United	10.05	15.25	+1.2
General	10.05	15.25	+1.2
United	10.05	15.25	+1.2
General	10.05	15.25	+1.2
United	10.05	15.25	+1.2

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS			
Net	High	Low	Net
Net	High	Low	Net
Boeing	1.00	64.01	+0.1
Boeing	1.00	64.01	+0.1
Boeing	1.00	64.01	+0.1
Boeing	1.00	64.01	+0.1
Boeing	1.00	64.01	+0.1
Boeing	1.00	64.01	+0.1
Boeing	1.00	64.01	+0.1
Boeing	1.00	64.01	+0.1
Boeing	1.00	64.01	+0.1
Boeing	1.00	64.01	+0.1

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS			
Net	High	Low	Net
Net	High	Low	Net
Fidelity Invest. Growth	37.06	+0.1	+0.1
Fidelity Invest. Growth	37.06	+0.1	+0.1
Fidelity Invest. Growth	37.06	+0.1	+0.1
Fidelity Invest. Growth	37.06	+0.1	+0.1
Fidelity Invest. Growth	37.06	+0.1	+0.1
Fidelity Invest. Growth	37.06	+0.1	+0.1
Fidelity Invest. Growth	37.06	+0.1	+0.1
Fidelity Invest. Growth	37.06	+0.1	+0.1
Fidelity Invest. Growth	37.06	+0.1	+0.1
Fidelity Invest. Growth	37.06	+0.1	+0.1

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		\$1 =
Military rates		\$1 =
Dollar buys (Jan. 10)	100.00	0.737
British pound (Jan. 10)	100.00	0.519
Japanese yen (Jan. 10)	100.00	0.008
South Korean won (Jan. 10)	100.00	0.001
Commercial rates		\$1 =
Commercial rates		\$1 =
Bahrain (Dinar)	100.00	0.377
British pound (Jan. 10)	100.00	0.519
Canada (Dollar)	100.00	0.737
Denmark (Krone)	100.00	0.008
Egypt (Pound)	100.00	0.001
Hong Kong (Dollar)	100.00	0.737
Hungary (Forint)	100.00	0.001
Iceland (Krona)	100.00	0.008
Ireland (Pound)	100.00	0.737
Japan (Yen)	100.00	0.008
Kuwait (Dinar)	100.00	0.001
Norway (Krone)	100.00	0.008
Philippines (Peso)	100.00	0.001
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	100.00	0.001
Singapore (Dollar)	100.00	0.737
South Korea (Won)	100.00	0.001
Switzerland (Franc)	100.00	0.737
Thailand (Baht)	100.00	0.001
Turkey (New Lira)	100.00	0.001

Military exchange rates		\$1 =
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British pound (Jan. 10)	100.00	0.519
Japanese yen (Jan. 10)	100.00	0.008
South Korean won (Jan. 10)	100.00	0.001
Switzerland (Franc)	100.00	0.737
Thailand (Baht)	100.00	0.001
Turkey (New Lira)	100.00	0.001
U.S. dollar (Jan. 10)	100.00	1.000
U.S. dollar (Jan. 10)	100.00	1.000
U.S. dollar (Jan. 10)	100.00	1.000
U.S. dollar (Jan. 10)	100.00	1.000
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U.S. dollar (Jan. 10)	100.00	1.000
U.S. dollar (Jan. 10)	100.00	1.000
U.S. dollar (Jan. 10)	100.00	1.000

PRECIOUS METALS

New York Mercile close		\$1 =
New York Mercile close		\$1 =
Gold	418.90	0.737
Silver	6.425	0.008

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate		\$1 =
Prime rate		\$1 =
Prime rate	5.25	0.008
Discount rate	2.25	0.008
3-month bill	1.25	0.008
3-month bill	1.25	0.008
3-month bill	1.25	0.008
3-month bill	1.25	0.008
3-month bill	1.25	0.008
3-month bill	1.25	0.008
3-month bill	1.25	0.008
3-month bill	1.25	0.008
3-month bill	1.25	0.008

Cents and Sensibility

Money tip of the day

Reassess spending habits

CBS MarketWatch

NEW YORK — After the "spend, spend, spend" mentality of the holidays, it's time to reassess where your money goes.

If you didn't make a budget for the holiday season, you may be discovering, as the bills mount higher, that you've overspent. As Jason R. Rich writes in the new book "Make Your Paycheck Last," you can be thrifty without being cheap.

Just ask yourself these questions before every purchase:

- What priority would I give this expense: absolutely necessary, important, not critical or frivolous?
- What benefits will I receive from this purchase?
- Do I have the money to afford this purchase?
- Can I save any money by

making this purchase with a coupon, at a sale price or other discount?

- Is there a similar product or service that will cost less?
- Am I sure that I'm getting the best value?
- Are there any additional costs for making this purchase, such as interest that will be accrued on a credit card or fees from my bank?
- Given these additional costs, is my purchase still worth it?

Rich recommends that you make a table of expenses to save on for next year while the holidays are still fresh in your mind. Calculate how much you spent on gifts, gift wrappings, shipping costs, food, decorations, party clothes, holiday activities, travel, entertainment and other costs.

Discover why so many people are saying...

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SIPC

Sunday Horoscope

Capricorn hosts the astrological party, or perhaps the word "gathering" is more fitting, as this is no out-of-control event. It is a dignified, formal affair. Venus and Mercury enter fashionably late, inspiring us to take a more serious approach to relationships. Notice love's role in your life. How do you love, and how do you know you are loved?

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT (January 9)

You build on your fantastic attributes this year and kick some of your less fantastic habits in the process. A lucky deal comes through for you at the end of this month. Romantically, you'll be more aware of what you're giving and therefore ready to accept better, too. Commitments are nailed in April. Retreat in August. Love signs are Aries and Gemini.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

The stars activate your envy button. Someone rich makes life seem easy from your point of view — as if all you have to do is make enough money and everything else will follow. Look deeper for truth and meaning.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

They say domestication is the enemy of romance, but you can prove them wrong. You've got a way of arranging your environment to bring about amorous feelings. What style. What class.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

Some stardust enters your heart — for the moment, that is. You could lose all your senses and pull an "Ooops! ... I did it again!" ala the Britney Spears song. Make sure your "captor" knows you're not really serious.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Your mental picture lights up — it's your chance to be downright scholarly. Fascinating information drifts onto your path. Soak it up like a child with an open mind who doesn't know his or her limitations.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

You're in no mood to deny your feelings. While you're looking longingly in someone's direction, someone else is looking longingly toward you. These games of triangular love

could go on for days.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Noble pursuits are necessary to sustain life. And so are frivolous pursuits. Engage equity in acts of big importance and graceful insouciance — although you may find it difficult to distinguish between the two.

Holiday Mathis

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23), it's the perfect time to take a risk in love — it has to be a real risk, though, the kind that makes your palms sweat. If you know your gesture is going to be well received, it doesn't count. The very essence of romance is uncertainty.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

You're aligning with your sensuality. You find beauty in natural occurrences and music in the soft wind and gentle rain. Restore your balance by taking time alone to appreciate the elements in your own way.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Your social acumen goes deeper than just being a witty participant in the right place with the right people. When friends come to you in a broken-down state, you offer love in the form of a listening, non-judgmental ear.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Relationships are an intricate puzzle, and you'll fit new pieces together today. It feels like you've been asking the same question since the dawn of time. Well, you're finally heard, and you'll get your answer.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Romantic risk is favored. You are just imagining the pain you anticipate will happen if you put your heart on the line. But if you think it's going to hurt, it probably will. The trick is to hold still just when you feel like running.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

There's a chance to show great mercy. Such an opportunity doesn't come along every day, so seize the moment. You can make a difference to the people who needs your help the most.

Creators Syndicate

'Nightmares' aren't from horses

Why do we call bad or scary dreams "nightmares"?

Because of the similarity in form between the second element of the compound "nightmare" and the noun "mare," meaning "a female horse," many people have assumed a connection between the two words.

Actually, however, the "mare" of "nightmare" is a survival of an older "mare" found in Old English.

"Mare" was a word in English as early as the 8th century, but it was obsolete by the 18th century. Old English "mare" means "an

evil spirit thought to oppress people during sleep." The compound "nightmare" first appears in Middle English in the 13th century, in a sense much the same as "mare" in Old English.

Not until the 16th century was the meaning of "nightmare" extended to refer to a frightening or oppressive dream, probably from the belief or suggestion that such dreams were caused by evil spirits.

This column was prepared by the editors of Merriam-Webster's Concise Dictionary, Tenth Edition. Readers may send questions to Merriam-Webster's Wordwatch, P.O. Box 261, 47 Federal St., Springfield, Mass. 01102.

Make certain neighbor gets point that she's far too nosy

Dear Abby: How does one deal with a nosy neighbor? "Miss Nosy" looks through my mail, and I caught her red-handed with a former neighbor's mail, which she had opened, read and apparently hoarded. I didn't confront her because I had just moved next door and didn't want to start a feud.

Miss Nosy claims she goes into my mailbox to make sure our postman hasn't accidentally put something for her in there. Doesn't she know that if he did, I'd give it to her? If someone comes to my door, Miss Nosy calls and demands to know who it is and as much about his or her life history as I'm willing to share. She also asks me questions that are far too personal. She is elderly, but I don't think that's a valid excuse for her behavior.

I'm considering replacing my mailbox with one that locks so that only I can get my mail out.

— **Invaded in Tennessee**

Dear Invaded: What your neighbor is doing is called mail tampering, and it's a felony. A locked mailbox is the surest, safest solution to your problem. You would be doing your neighbors a tremendous favor if you

called the local postal inspector's office and reported what the woman is doing. They may not haul Miss Nosy off to the pokey, but she'll be sent a letter saying that what she's doing is a felony, and if a check should go missing, she'll be blamed for it.

P.S. Suggest to the woman that since she doesn't seem to have enough to occupy her, she should start a Neighborhood Watch program.

Dear Abby



Dear Abby: How do you get a child to stop biting? My sister's little boy, "Alan," is 1½. My son, "Lee," is 2. Every time they are together, Alan bites Lee out of anger. Sometimes the bite remains for days — and once it stayed a whole week.

Lee doesn't bite his cousin back. Since we are a close family, the children are together almost every day.

My sister is ashamed of her son's bullying. Do you have any solutions?

Dear Frustrated: For the next month or so, you and your sister should make a point of watching the children closely. When Alan becomes aggressive and starts to bite, his mother should make eye contact with him and say, "Stop

it! We don't do that! If you're going to bite, you can't play with Lee." Then the child should be separated from his cousin for a 15- to 30-minute time out. Once Alan understands that there are consequences for his actions, the biting should stop.

Dear Abby: My husband, "Ben," and I have a beautiful daughter, "Annie," who is born after a difficult labor and an emergency C-section in April 2001.

We're now expecting our second child, who is due next April just a few days after Annie's birthday. (This birth will also be Cesarean.) Brad thinks it would be great to have the baby on Annie's birthday, but I'm not so sure. Do you think it's best for each child to have their own birthday, or would it form special bond between siblings to share a birthday?

— **Undecided Mama in Ohio**

Dear Undecided Mama: I'm pleased to oblige. Children are individuals, and each child should have one day to be the sole center of attention. Although it might be more convenient to celebrate both birthdays together, I recommend against it.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69840, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the internet at <http://www.uspspress.com/dearabby> or by e-mail at dearabby@uspspress.com.

Daughter must deal with dad, his dislike for her boyfriend

Dear Annie: I am a good kid. I'm 19 years old and a freshman in college, planning to be a veterinarian someday. I make good grades, I don't do drugs, don't drink and I don't party. I am not having sex, and I go to church every Sunday.

My father, however, complains about my choices and my boyfriend, "Kyle," whom I have been dating off and on for five years, is not perfect, but he treats me like a queen, isn't abusive and doesn't pressure me about sex. Right now, Kyle has no job and doesn't have the money to go to college, but he's working hard to develop the skills needed for a good career, maybe in the military.

Kyle and I had sex before re-devoting ourselves to our religion. My father holds this against us and, consequently, dislikes Kyle immensely. Dad insists that I date other people and gets angry when Kyle and I go out.

Dad also thinks Kyle is not good enough for me because he cannot support me. Since we aren't planning to get married anytime soon, I'm not worried

about finances, not to mention my salary as a veterinarian ought to help a lot.

Here's the problem: Kyle's parents have invited me to join them for a vacation at a cabin they are renting. I have agreed to go, and my father is furious.

I am old enough to make my own choices but still young enough to be subjected to punishment, and my vengeful father will probably take away my car.

Am I supposed to be an obedient daughter and follow his rules or stop being a child and make decisions for myself? I need your help.

— **Trying Hard**

Dear Trying: You sound like a sensible, responsible young woman.

However, by your count, you have been dating Kyle since you were 14. We can understand why your father thinks you should broaden your dating experience. Still, you are indeed old enough to make your own decisions — and that means you must be willing to accept the consequences, including the loss of car privileges.

Dear Annie: My daughter is in third grade. The teacher permits the children to use the bathroom only at lunch or recess, but not during class time. Sometimes the kids eat or drink during the day and cannot wait that long. When my daughter comes home from school, she runs to the toilet. One little girl wet herself in class.

The students are awarded "table points" if they do extra things in the classroom, and they can use these points to go to the bathroom, if they do. But if they are desperate and must go anyway, their group is penalized.

I think this is cruel, but I don't want my daughter to be singled out if I complain to the principal. Am I making too much of this?

— **Pee Patrol in Pasadena, Calif.**

Dear Pasadena: Children should never be penalized for needing to use the bathroom. If you don't want your daughter singled out, organize a group of concerned parents to approach the principal and inform him of the outrageous policy he changed immediately.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Los Angeles Times. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate

Annie's Mailbox



RELIGION

Big-box orthodox: It's kosher, but ...

BY PETER SLEVIN
The Washington Post

The sign in the window of the kosher Chinese restaurant looks forlorn. Hand-lettered and slightly faded from the strong winter sun, it is a plea to customers to remain steadfast against a powerful invader.

"Please patronize the real jewels of the community. The *heimitische* owned groceries and restaurants," the sign reads. Above it, inside a thin circle is the word Jewel. A diagonal line runs through it, the international symbol of opposition.



Washington Post

At Kol Tur Kosher Foods in Chicago, Chayim Knobloch says he has lost "a fairly significant percentage of business." A struggle being played out in north Chicago — pitting family-owned kosher shops against big supermarket chains — is part of a larger play for Jewish shoppers, and the growing ethnic food market nationwide.

Jewel is a well-established supermarket chain that caused no heartache and invited no wrath until a couple of months ago, when it suddenly bought a huge billboard on Chicago's North Side to announce the opening of a gleaming kosher food department at a nearby store.

To Jewel and its parent Albertsons, the move was a straightforward play for customers and profits.

"I've definitely lost a fairly significant percentage of business," said Chayim Knobloch, proprietor of Kol Tur Kosher Foods, a store and deli located across the street from the billboard. "I've begun trimming ex-

penses and staff."

When it comes to prices, he says, he cannot win.

The struggle being played out in north Chicago is part of a larger play for Jewish shoppers — and the growing ethnic food market — nationwide. Large companies including Albertsons, Wal-Mart, Safeway and Costco are seeking competitive advantage in a crowded sales sector by catering to specialty audiences.

Roughly 18,000 supermarkets carry products prepared according to Orthodox Judaism's dietary code, fueling a market that has been growing by 12 to 15 percent for nearly a decade,

according to Kosher Today, an industry trade paper.

Yakov Yarmove, the Albertsons' executive who is overseeing Jewel's kosher project, said it's all about creating a "point of differentiation to make sure we've got a competitive edge. So our stores aren't cookie-cutter."

"Years ago, where the Wal-Marts, Costcos, Targets and Kmart's of the world focused on general merchandise, they're now getting into the food business in a very strong way," Yarmove said. "We're not trying to hurt a local business or a local community, but at the same time we're listening to the local community and their needs."

Shortly after Jewel remodeled its store in September, an influential group of rabbis tried to shut up the kosher stores by mailing an appeal to thousands of Jews, urging them to stick together and shop at the smaller stores that have long served the community.

Devon Avenue, a hub of tongues and nationalities running west from Lake Michigan, was being shedding Jewish shops, bakeries and restaurants is now before Jewel opened its kosher emporium. Narrow storefronts that once housed kosher butchers are now as likely to be an Indian grocery, an Afghan restaurant or a Russian medical supply company.

The reasons for this are as varied as shifting demographics and changing consumer habits. The store's dynamics are as natural as the dynamics of an ancient bazaar.

"We live in a free-market society. People will go to whoever serves them best," said Don Nussbaum, who teaches at a nearby Orthodox boarding school and works part time at Rosen's World of Judaism on Devon. "If that takes away from local business, then maybe the local businesses aren't doing their best."



DALLAS MORNING NEWS/KOT

Chandrasekar Narayanan, left, and senior priest Janak Shukla lead a prayer service Jan. 2 at the Dallas/Port Worth Hindu Temple Society in Irving, Texas, for victims of the tsunami in Asia.

Tsunami grief healed by rituals of varied beliefs

BY JEFFREY WEISS
The Dallas Morning News

DALLAS

Members of the Dallas/Port Worth Hindu Temple held a *deepa puja* Sunday morning. The "prayer of light," honoring victims of southern Asia's earthquake and tsunami, felt something like a candlelight vigil in any church or synagogue.

But the Hindu religious response to massive human tragedy is essentially different. The flower-draped altar and oil candles surrounded by elaborate statues of Indian deities were clearly not part of a Christian or Jewish service. And differences in how the faiths try to explain unimaginable suffering are more than just ritual.

Most of the victims of the disaster follow faith traditions unfamiliar to most Americans: Hindus in India, Muslims in Indonesia and Buddhists in Sri Lanka.

Following catastrophe, the American religious mainstream generally offers a broadly uniform message of comfort: Trust in the loving and just God. He has a meaningful plan for life. We may not understand that meaning until we are with him in the hereafter. Turn to Job and other books in the Bible for clues, if not answers.

But the religious leaders for most of this disaster's victims deliver very different messages.

Buddhism may be the most foreign tradition for Americans. Buddhists have no trouble reconciling worldly tragedy with a loving god, because they don't believe in any god.

"It is not by any particular god" that such tragedies occur, said Dr. Bhante Gunaratana, a Sri Lankan monk who is the president of the Bhavana Society and abbot of its monastery in West Virginia. "A compassionate god would never do anything like this."

Buddhists believe the universe operates on a strict system of karma, moral justice that spans generations. Bad things that happen to a person in this life are the result of bad things the person did in this life — or in myriad earlier lives. That means there are never "innocent victims."

The goal of the kind of Buddhism practiced in Sri Lanka — Theravada — is for the soul to become so enlightened that it escapes the inevitable pain and suffering of the cycle of death and rebirth.

Like Buddhism, Hinduism accepts the idea of

karma that passes from one lifetime to another. But Hinduism, the faith followed by most people in India, also includes a belief in a loving god who affects peoples' lives.

Unlike most Western faiths, Hinduism has no universally recognized authorities, texts or doctrines. Rituals and practice change from region to region.

But Hindus generally agree that there is one all-powerful god who manifests in many forms, male and female. And that god can sometimes send messages through natural events.

Sunday's *deepa puja* in Dallas, attended by more than 100 devotees, included a prayer for the dead to that single, highest god. "The light symbolizes the divine power of God, the brightest and most sacred of all. Similarly, the light that emanates from the departed souls is also powerful and sacred. We pray that these two lights merge, symbolizing the unification of the immortal soul of God."

Indonesia has more Muslims than any other country in the world, almost 210 million. The Indonesian island of Sumatra was closest to the center of the earthquake. Residents of Aceh, the quake-racked northern part, follow a particularly orthodox Muslim practice.

Muslim explanations for tragedy share elements of Jewish and Christian belief. That's not surprising, given Islam shares roots with those faiths. Somewhat altered versions of Jesus, Mary, Moses, Abraham and other figures familiar to Jews and Christians are found in the Quran.

Like Christianity and Judaism, Islam teaches that God is the ruler of the world and has a plan that is expressed even in tragedy, said Imam Yusuf Kavakci of the Dallas Central Mosque in Richardson.

"We believe that everything is in the *taqdir* — destiny — predetermined by Allah, the creator," he said.

The Quran teaches that God tests people through events on Earth, he said. Tragedies can also be a signal from Allah. And innocents who suffer in this life will be rewarded the Day of Judgment with a better position in heaven, he said.

News accounts from the disaster zone show that people are still dealing mostly with survival issues — food, shelter and injury. But they also show funerals and religious services. Even surrounded by unimaginable catastrophe, people are turning to the rituals and routines of faith.

And while each religion teaches different things about tragedy, all attempt to deal with the universal human experience of grief and sorrow.

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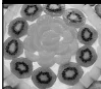
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Okafor off to good start for startup team

Bobcats rookie proving he can carry offensive load for expansion franchise

BY JENNA FRYER
The Associated Press

W H CHARLOTTE, N.C. When Emeka Okafor broke Shaquille O'Neal's rookie record for consecutive double-doubles, O'Neal softly — and sarcastically — clapped his hands.

"He gets the golf clap," O'Neal said. "There's only one me. There won't ever be another like me."

Maybe so, but there's no denying that Okafor has turned plenty of heads in his rookie season — just like O'Neal did on the way to becoming one of the 50 greatest players in NBA history.

Okafor, the No. 2 pick in the NBA Draft, has settled right into his role as the cornerstone of the expansion Bobcats and quickly caught the eye of his opponents. He's been chosen as the NBA's rookie of the month the two times the award has been given this season, and his streak of 19 straight games in double figures in points and rebounds broke O'Neal's mark of 16.

The streak was broken this week in a loss to Cleveland, but Okafor picked right back up two nights later with 18 points and 10 rebounds in a victory over Minnesota in which Okafor spent most of the night guarding Kevin Garnett.

"If he continues to work and become more polished, he can be really special," Garnett said. "He's playing like an animal right now."

The Bobcats never wavered in their desire to draft Okafor. Coach and general manager Bernie Bickerstaff spent five days scouting last year on Connecticut's campus.

Okafor was everything the Bobcats wanted to build their franchise around. A proven winner, he led UConn to the national title last season and was the Most Outstanding Player of the NCAA tournament.

He's tough, strong, takes pride in defense and is extremely intelligent. An Academic All-American, Okafor graduated in three years with a degree in finance and a 3.8 grade point average.

Still, there were questions.

He sat out three games at

UConn last season with a back injury that had some NBA scouts concerned. And he was dogged by the perception he couldn't start on offense.

"The word coming out of college was he would be great defensively and on the boards but would struggle offensively," Miami coach Stan Van Gundy said. "He hasn't at all. He's got good, quick moves around the basket and he has shot the ball extremely well."

"He has proven to be an offensive force and he seems to be getting better and better."

Heading into the weekend, Okafor was averaging 15.8 points per game. His 11.4 rebounds per

"The word coming out of college was he would be great defensively and on the boards but would struggle offensively. He hasn't at all."

Stan Van Gundy
Miami Heat coach

game ranked third in the NBA. If his productivity has caught some by surprise, Okafor isn't among them.

"I have no idea why people think that about me. I led [UConn] in scoring in a system that was not designed for me to score all the time," Okafor said. "I know I can score, and I don't really understand why people are surprised to see my scoring in the NBA."

Still, the questions were strong enough that the Orlando Magic passed on Okafor with the No. 1 pick in the draft. When the Magic called high schooler Dwight Howard's name on draft night, a crowd of about 14,000 at the Charlotte Coliseum erupted into cheers and Bobcats management let out a sigh of relief.

They had traded up from No. 4

to No. 2 to position themselves for a shot at Okafor, then had to hope the Magic wouldn't take him first.

The Bobcats would have been pleased with Howard, they insisted, but Okafor was a far better fit for a startup. They needed someone who could handle being the face of the franchise, and understand that every personnel move Charlotte makes is based around him and the long-term results it can produce.

"His maturity is important because he has the ability to see the big picture," Bickerstaff said. "We are trying to lay a foundation, and he sees the big picture. We're going to put this together, we're going to find the big pieces, and he makes it easier with his approach to the game."

Making the U.S. Olympic team was an extra bonus in Okafor's development. He didn't play much, but spent as much time learning about the NBA from his teammates as he did soaking up the history and culture in every country the team traveled to.

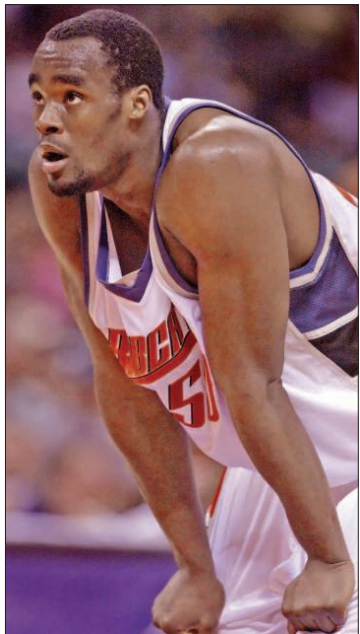
Bickerstaff said Okafor's willingness to observe and learn, and his attention to detail, will make him an NBA standout.

"He's a guy with a routine. If his routine is disoriented in any way, it impacts his game," Bickerstaff said. "All the great players I've been around, they had a routine. He gets it. A lot of pro players don't understand responsibility. You don't just show up because you are good."

Seattle guard Ray Allen, a UConn alum, is familiar with Okafor from watching the Huskies on TV. Even though he doesn't know him well personally, he said he never doubted Okafor or would come charging out of the gate in the NBA.

"I tell everyone that playing for Jim Calhoun at UConn is the hardest thing you'll ever do. The NBA is easy compared to that," Allen said. "If he could play for Calhoun, and he could win a national championship for Calhoun, he was ready for this level and would have no problem breaking out of the pigeon hole as a defensive player."

The question now is whether Okafor can sustain his level of play and win Rookie of the Year



Charlotte Bobcats' Emeka Okafor, above, recently broke Shaquille O'Neal's rookie record with double-doubles in 19 consecutive games.

honors. With an even temperament — Okafor said he only gets excited "about the big stuff, like winning a national championship and getting drafted" — he refuses to look that far ahead.

"It's way too early, we've got way too many games left for me

to be even thinking about that," Okafor said. "I could go out there and tank it from here on out and someone else could play great. So right now I am just worrying about doing my job and doing it as well as I can, and nothing else."

Webber wonders whether New Yorkers would welcome him

BY CHRIS SHERIDAN
The Associated Press

"Whisper in Isaiah's ear for me," Chris Webber said.

OK, Chris. Here it is: Psst, Isaiah Thomas, listen up.

Webber has a few reservations, but he's definitely intrigued by the idea of playing for the New York Knicks.

Webber rolled through New York last week as the Sacramento Kings made the first stop on a road road to securing 22 points in a seven-point victory that gave the Kings their 20th win

of the season. Only six NBA teams entered the weekend with as many as 20 wins, and none of them would figure to be eager to part with a player as integral to their success as Webber is to the Kings. But Sacramento is a special case, still harboring the same unresolved chemistry issues that led Peja Stojakovic to ask for a trade over the summer.

And the team's financial commitment to Webber — about \$60 million over the next three years — is somewhat of a risk as he continues his comeback from microfracture surgery on his right knee. Webber freely acknowledges he's lost some of the explosiveness his knee used to provide, and he remains cautious when considering whether his knee will hold up over the long haul. He also harbors some apprehension over whether he'd be welcomed in New York, a prospect he gave serious consideration to over the summer before re-signing with Sacramento.

"There's no player that's ever

touched a basketball that I've ever loved and admired more than Isaiah," Webber said of the Knicks president, who was winning NBA titles with the Pistons when Webber was growing up as a teenager in Detroit.

Thomas is not scared off by the amount of money remaining on Webber's contract, nor his 15 percent trade kicker, but he is known to be apprehensive about the long-term health of Webber's knee.

Asked at the Kings-Knicks game what type of piece he'd like to add to the Knicks, Thomas an-

swered "Shaquille O'Neal."

But Thomas privately remains fixated on Webber, seeing him as one of the final major pieces to complete a transformation of a roster to which he's already added Stephen Marbury, Jamal Crawford, Tim Thomas, Nazr Mohammed and rookie Trevor Ariza, who has supplanted Penny Hardaway — another Thomas acquisition — as the backup shooting guard behind Allan Houston during Crawford's current injury list absence.



Boyan boosts L.A., tsunami aid effort

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Kobe Bryant was so money, and not just for the Los Angeles Lakers.

Bryant had 27 points and 10 assists in a 111-104 victory over the Houston Rockets on Friday night when every point he scored meant money for children who survived the tsunami in Southeast Asia.

Asked if he had a point total in mind before the game, Bryant said, "A hundred. There's a greater cost at stake."

Along with Bryant, Houston teammates Tracy McGrady and Bobby Sura donated \$1,000 each to UNICEF, as did other NBA players Friday night. McGrady led the Rockets with 26 points.

"It's just a little donation to try to help out so they could get their lives back together," said Sura, who added 20 points. "It felt good."

In all, the three players contributed \$73,000. Bryant and McGrady shared a hug at the buzzer.

"It's for a great benefit," McGrady said. "I tried not to think about it during the game, but every time I made a shot, I was like, 'There's two thousand dollars, there's three thousand dollars.'"

The Lakers needed some charity of their own after losing two straight games at San Antonio and Dallas.

"It was a big game," Bryant said. "Their team is trying to figure out how to get into the playoffs as we are right on the edge of the playoffs. We're fighting every game. It's an uphill battle for us, but we seem to rise to the challenge."

Four other Lakers scored in double figures, including Lamar Odom with 20 points and 12 rebounds and Caron Butler with 21 points.

Houston's Yao Ming scored 25 points before fouling out with 2:18 remaining.

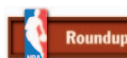
Lakers coach Rudy Tomjanovich improved to 2-0 this season against his former team. The Lakers beat the Rockets 84-79 on Nov. 13 in Houston, when an emotional Tomjanovich was honored for his 34 years.

This time, Tomjanovich said, it was "a very big win. I called it a play-off game."

The Rockets cut their 24-point deficit to nine points at the start of the fourth quarter. But the Lakers responded with a 6-0 spur and then Brian Cook hit consecutive three-pointers on assists by Bryant for a 95-77 lead with 9:30 remaining.

Helped by McGrady and Yao, the Rockets got within eight points with 5½ minutes left on McGrady's fast-break layup. Yao had four straight points before McGrady scored four in a row.

"I was a very heavy load on your back," Yao said about the 24-point lode. "People can say, 'Let's start over in the second half



like it's zero-zero.' But you can't stop thinking about that pack on your back. We played with much better energy in the second half, but we paid for what we did in the first half."

Bryant's one-handed reverse dunk ignited the crowd and kept the Lakers ahead 98-88. He bumped into Yao and still got off a turnaround jumper for a 104-94 lead with 2:51 left.

McGrady's basket and two free throws by Maurice Taylor put the Rockets six points back with 1½ minutes remaining. Odom took a pass from Bryant and hit a three-pointer as Los Angeles led 109-100. The Rockets got no closer.

Even though Houston played better in the fourth, coach Jeff Van Gundy said, "I don't think you could watch this game and feel good about anything."

Kings 100, Hawks 97: At Atlanta, Mike Bibby scored 31 points, including a clinching jumper with 11.7 seconds remaining, and Sacramento handed Atlanta its sixth straight loss.

The Hawks (5-26) have lost 11 of 12. Only New Orleans has a worse record.

Chris Webber bounced back from a 6-for-21 shooting performance in a loss to Toronto. He made his first six shots and finished 13-for-22 from the field for 28 points.

Pistons 110, Celtics 104: At Boston, Richard Hamilton scored 25 points, recovering from a dubious record-setting night by making two key baskets down the stretch.

Chauncey Billups scored 22 for the defending NBA champions, who lost to Memphis 101-79 on Thursday night as Hamilton went 0-for-10 from the field and 14-for-14 from the line to become the first player in NBA history to lead his team in scoring without making a single basket.

Nets 82, Warriors 72: Vince Carter scored 22 points, Richard Jefferson added 20 and host New Jersey bounced back from two bad road losses to beat Golden State.

Jason Kidd added 13 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists as the Nets sent the Warriors to their fourth straight loss.

Magic 111, Bobcats 91: Hedo Turkoglu scored 22 points, fellow reserve Pat Garrity added 16 in a victory over visiting Charlotte.

Grant Hill scored 16 points and Tony Battie added 13 on 6-for-6 shooting for the Magic, who on Nov. 6 became the first team to lose to the Bobcats. Steve Francis had 10 points and tied his season high with 13 assists.

Bucks 107, Raptors 105 (OT): At Toronto, Desmond



Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant dunks over Houston Rockets' Tracy McGrady during the first half Friday night in Los Angeles. Bryant and McGrady each pledged \$1,000 for every point they scored to tsunami relief.

Mason had 23 points and Michael Redd scored 10 of his 15 points in the fourth quarter.

Jalen Rose sent the game over-time with a driving layup at the buzzer, but Mason had five points in the extra period and Toronto's Morris Peterson missed a potential tying jumper with one second left.

Timberwolves 89, 76ers 84: Sam Cassell scored host Minnesota's first 14 points in the fourth quarter and finished with 26 as the Timberwolves ended a four-game losing streak with a victory over Philadelphia, which played without guard Allan Iverson.

Iverson, the NBA's leading scorer, sat out the game with a sprained right ankle sustained Wednesday at Utah. He was also bothered by the flu and a bruised left shoulder, but Sixers coach Jim O'Brien said it was the swollen ankle that kept Iverson out.

Bulls 84, Jazz 78: At Chicago, Ronaei Lind Deng had 22 points and seven rebounds, and Eddy Curry added 21 points as the Bulls handed Utah its eighth consecutive loss.

Matt Harpring and Gordon Girick both had 13 points for Utah, which hasn't won since beating the Philadelphia 76ers 103-101 on Dec. 20.

Kirk Hinrich scored 12 points, and Ben Gordon and Andres Nocioni each had 11 for Chicago, which has won eight of its last 11 games.

Heat 103, Trail Blazers 92: Miami began its longest road trip of the season by getting double-doubles from Shaquille O'Neal and Dwyane Wade to defeat the injury-depleted Trail Blazers.

O'Neal had 28 points and 10 rebounds and Wade had 25 points and 12 assists for the Heat, who led by as many as 22 in winning for the 16th time in 17 games. Their only loss came Monday against the SuperSonics, and they can avenge it Sunday night at Seattle on the second stop of a five-game trip.

Miami has won eight straight road games.

Carter's admission dismays Raptors

The Associated Press

TORONTO — Vince Carter's former teammates were dismayed Friday after hearing him admit he didn't always try his hardest when he played for the Toronto Raptors.

In an interview broadcast Thursday on TNT, network analyst John Thompson asked Carter

if he pushed himself as hard as he should have in Toronto.

In years past, "I said Carter, acquired by the New Jersey Nets on Dec 17. 'I was fortunate to have the talent... you get spoiled when you're able to do a lot of things. You say that you don't have to work at it.'

"Now, with all the injuries, I have to work harder. I'm a little happier, I'm a fresher, and I have made me want to attack the basket."

Many have questioned Carter's dedication, his commitment to off-season conditioning and his desire to improve, but some where were surprised to hear Carter acknowledge it.

"It's a reflection on him and his character," Raptors coach Rafeal Alston said. "Is he a guy that you can go to war with night in and night out? That's what a lot of people are going to be questioning."

Alston also suggested that Carter cost the Raptors games with his lack of effort.

"It hurts," Alston said. "I don't know if a player who is considered an All-Star and has so many fan votes going into All-Star week wants to have that on his rap sheet."

Carter has played well since being traded for Alonzo Mourning, Aaron Williams, Eric Williams and two first-round draft picks. He is averaging 22.5 points in 40.3 minutes with New Jersey, compared to 15.9 points in 30.4 minutes with the Raptors.

Toronto guard Morris Peterson was shocked when he watched the interview on television.

"It caught me off guard, being a professional player that's someone I always pride myself on," Peterson said. "I can say better before than I know I give it everything I can."

"You could tell he wasn't playing like he used to," Peterson said.

Toronto coach Sam Mitchell didn't want to talk about Carter. "That's between Vince and his conscience," Mitchell said.

Union, league pledge \$500,000 each to relief effort

NEW YORK — The NBA players' union has decided to donate \$500,000 to help victims of last month's Indian Ocean tsunami, and the NBA will match the gift, a league spokesman said Friday.

The donations are to be made to the United Nations' World Food Program, NBA spokesman Brian Finn said.

Several NBA players, including the Indiana Pacers' Jermaine O'Neal, decided to donate \$100 for every point they scored or assist they recorded in games played earlier this week, and many teams are donating money

and collecting funds from fans.

Police try to ID more fans

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — Police are trying to identify more fans who were caught on camera throwing food or drinks or walking onto the court during the brawl at November's Detroit Pistons-Toronto Raptors game.

Auburn Hills police released photographs of at least seven different people they are trying to identify. Lt. James Manning said Friday that the department plans to charge them with violating a local ordinance that prohibits spectators at sporting events from walking on the playing surface or throwing things.

Oakland County Prosecutor David Gorceyca previously charged 10 people, including five Pacers, in the brawl with misdemeanor assault and battery. One fan, Bryant Jackson, also is charged with felonious assault. Two fans have been charged under the city's ordinance.

Gorceyca has said that throwing a can on someone constitutes assault and battery. However, he does not plan to charge the additional people for whom the Auburn Hills police are looking.

Abdur-Rahim, Miles join injured list

PORTLAND, Ore. — The Portland Trail Blazers announced forward Shaheen Abdur-Rahim and Darius Miles on the injured list Friday and activated rookie center Ha Seung-Jin.

Abdur-Rahim, who has missed seven games because of loose pants in his right elbow, will have surgery Wednesday that could sideline him for five weeks.

Miles injured his left knee in the Blazers' loss on Wednesday to the Los Angeles Clippers. He is expected to be sidelined for up to two weeks.

Both Abdur-Rahim and Miles have started at small forward for the Blazers. Ruben Patterson got the nod Friday night, starting 27 points on 12-for-14 shooting in Portland's 103-92 loss to the Miami Heat.

"People forget I was a scorer in college," Patterson said. "I can score in this game. I'm just trying to step up."

Abdur-Rahim had seen two doctors about a knee problem and had planned to get a third opinion, but decided Friday to go ahead with surgery.

"It's been bothering me for a month," he said. "It wasn't going to do any good to continue on with it. My thing is get it dealt with."

Ha, a 6-foot-3, 305-pound center, made his debut against the Heat, becoming the first South Korean to play in the NBA. A second-round pick in last year's draft, he played a final minute of the game and didn't record a stat.

The Blazers signed him on Dec. 26 and placed him on the injured list with lower back pain a day later.

Abdur-Rahim is averaging 15.7 points and eight rebounds in 23 games. An eight-year veteran, he had not missed a game in his career. Miles, his backup, averages 12.6 points and 5.1 rebounds.

Singh still on top in Mercedes

BY DOUG FERGUSON

The Associated Press

KAPALUA, Hawaii — Standing on the 12th tee, Mike Weir gazed down at the Pacific and watched dozens of surfers riding the waves. As he walked up the 14th green and saw the leader board in the Mercedes Championship, he saw someone riding a wave that was big — even by Maui standards.

There was Vijay Singh — on top of his game, in the lead and showing no signs of letting up.

"It's just a given he's going to be here," Weir said.

The only surprise Friday in the second round was that Singh was kind enough to give the rest of the winners-only field a fighting chance.

The 41-year-old Fijian was 6-under par through seven holes and on the verge of turning the season-opening tournament into a blowout. Then he stopped falling until the final hole, when Singh made a 10-foot birdie putt for an 8-under 65 that gave him a two-shot lead over Weir.

"I just started off really well and kept it going," said Singh, who was at 15-under 131 after two rounds on the Plantation Course at Kapalua.

He'll have to continue if he wants to win.

Weir looked sharp, overcoming a three-putt bogey from 15 feet on No. 10 to shoot a 10-under 63. Ernie Els, who was another shot behind after a 65, also made it look easy. In fact, the Big Easy has never had a round over par in 18 rounds at Kapalua.

"I just feel comfortable here," he said.

Tiger Woods feels anything but that. Woods is swinging better than he has in two years, and putting like he just picked up the game last week. Woods might be challenging Singh for the lead except for his difficulty on the greens, missing six birdie putts inside 8 feet on Friday in his round of 63 that left him five shots behind.

"If I average my normal putts per round like the last half of the year, I've got a shot at it," said Woods, who has taken 32 putts each of the first two days. "But hey, we've all got to go to it."

It can be done. Weir made putts from a variety of distances in matching his score from the first round of 2002, just one shot off the course record at Kapalua. Defending champion Stuart Appleby shot a 9-under 64 that got him back into contention, six shots behind. Singh, the only player without a bogey this week, had two birdies and one save.

Sergio Garcia and Jonathan Kaye each had 67 and were at 11-under 135, while Chad Campbell (67) and Stewart Kirk (68) kept Woods at 136. Retief Goosen and David Tomes who at 138.

Els isn't the only one who likes Kapalua.



Ernie Els chips onto the ninth green during the second round of the Mercedes Championships on Friday at the Kapalua Plantation Course in Maui, Hawaii. Els finished the day at 12-under, three shots behind leader Vijay Singh.

Singh had his 16th consecutive round at par or better on the cliff-side course, and he has never finished worse than eighth the last five times he has played.

"I think Vijay likes this course, obviously," Els said. "He has a very good record around here. He's got so much confidence now. A guy like Vijay, myself, Tiger, Retief, the longer hitters ... you can have some fun out there. You can really blow it out there, unlike other golf courses we play on tour."

"Vijay is the perfect candidate to shoot a low one around here."

Singh is a good candidate anywhere these days. He is coming off an amazing season in which he won nine times, including a major, and earned nearly \$11 million.

It is a scary thought to consider that a new year brought more of the same.

Even so, Els isn't willing to concede the tournament, the West Coast Swing, and certainly not the entire season.

"He's playing great golf. Let's not get that wrong," Els said.

"But it's a long year. We can all play this game. I get my act together, it's game on. And the same with Tiger and some other people. If he beats me this week, 'Well played.' But there's another week, and there's a long year to go."

There's a long way to go this weekend.

The only thing that went wrong for Singh was putting the wrong driver in his bag. He discovered the mistake about 20 minutes before he teed off, and sent his caddy-trainer to fetch it.

Then, Singh stormed into the lead.

He holed a 15-foot putt on No. 1, hit his tee shot to 5 feet on No. 2, then hit a crisp iron over a gorge to 15 feet on the par-5 fifth hole for an eagle. That was followed by another short birdie, then a 60-foot putt from just off the green. His great run finally ended when he missed a 3-foot birdie putt on the eighth.

His lead was five shots at that point, although Singh cooled and several other players slowly made their move up the leaderboard to keep things interesting on the weekend.

"With the start he had, he could easily have put 4 or 5 under on the back nine and off to the gods," Woods said. "At least I made a run and kept my spirits up a little bit."

Changes to BCS could include computer, coaches, committee

BY STEPHEN HAWKINS

The Associated Press

GRAPEVINE, Texas — Computers, coaches and a committee — or some combination of all three — are the most likely options for the next revision of the Bowl Championship Series.

Commissioners from the 11 Division I-A conferences met for more than five hours Friday in their first get-together since The Associated Press asked last month that its poll not be used in the formula that determines the teams for the four BCS games.

"What it's done is stimulate a re-evaluation of the whole criteria," ACC Commissioner John Swofford said. "It's interesting that in the past, most of the focus had been on the computers and where they fit in. This is the first year that we've really had the focus redirected to the human poll."

The meeting on the opening day of the NCAA convention was

the first step toward changes in the BCS. Commissioners will meet again in April, but BCS coordinator and Big 12 Commissioner Kevin Weiberg said there might not be any final decisions then. The primary issue is determining how to rank teams without the AP poll. The BCS formula, also using six computer rankings, was streamlined this season to put heavy emphasis on the two human polls, the AP and the ESPN/USA Today coaches poll.

Weiberg said the BCS could look to supplant the AP poll, "if there is a suitable replacement." The system, which started in 1989 and has overcome several changes, could also rank teams using the coaches poll and the computers.

There is still the concern of the coaches keeping their votes private.

"The transparency issue is one of our most important," Weiberg said. "That would put us in a position to have some level of discomfort moving forward."

Federer opens 2005 season with victory in Qatar Open

The Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — Roger Federer began 2005 the way he finished 2004: with a victory.

Federer beat sixth-seeded Ivan Ljubicic of Croatia 6-3, 6-1 Saturday in the Qatar Open.

Last year, he became the first man since Mats Wilander in 1988 to win three Grand Slam titles in a season, going 7-6 with 11 titles overall.

The top-ranked and top-seeded Federer needed just 63 minutes to defeat Ljubicic and claim his 23rd career title in his 31st final.

The top-ranked and top-seeded Federer needed just 63 minutes to defeat Ljubicic and claim his 23rd career title in his 31st final.

Gore becomes latest Miami player to enter NFL Draft

MIAMI — Miami running back Frank Gore is skipping his senior season and will enter the NFL Draft, becoming the second Hurricane in as many days to make that jump.

"I think it's time to move on," Gore said Friday.

He has already signed with agent David Levine.

Roscoe Parrish, Miami's leading receiver this season, made his decision to leave school Thursday.

Miami coach Larry Coker was among those who said Gore's stock would considerably rise if he stayed at Miami for 2005. Gore

had two major knee injuries in college, and was occasionally slowed by knee trouble this season. He had a team-best 945 yards, capping a career in which he ran for 1,975 yards and 17 touchdowns.

Gore has a 2-year-old son and a mother who is seriously ill with kidney disease, and he wants to begin providing for them.

Also on Friday, Missouri running back Damien Nash, who left the team in November, announced he would enter the draft.

Nash, a junior, rushed for 1,254 yards and 12 touchdowns in two seasons.

The relationship between Nash and Missouri coach Gary Pinkel apparently soured after Nash was critical of play-calling following Missouri's 20-17 loss to Oklahoma State on Oct. 23. He was suspended for one game, and after he returned, his playing time decreased.

Austria's Gruger wins men's World Cup downhill

CHAMONIX, France — Michael Gruger won a World Cup downhill for the second time this season Saturday to lead a strong showing by Austria, which captured three of the top four spots.

For the United States, Daron Rahmlow was fifth and overall World Cup leader Bode Miller shared the place.

Italy's Kristian Ghedina prevented an Austrian sweep by finishing second. Reigning downhill world champion Michael Walchhofer was third, followed by teammate Mario Scheiber.

The American Football Coaches Association is expected to discuss that issue when it begins its convention Sunday in Louisville, Ky. Coaches voted last fall to begin releasing their final ballot.

More likely for the BCS is a "hybrid" approach using the coaches and computer polls, plus a selection committee.

"There probably needs to be a third element," Big 10 Commissioner James Delany said. "I think everybody feels like if you have more information, more ways to look at it, you minimize extremes."

Weiberg said commissioners seemed to like the idea of a selection committee, similar to the 10-person panel of conference commissioners and athletic directors used to set the 65-team field for the NCAA basketball tournament.

"We did not get into the details, but I think there is interest in it," Weiberg said. "We realize a lot of the same issues apply."

Slovenia's Maze wins women's Cup giant slalom

SANTA CATERINA VALFURVA, Italy — Slovenia's Tina Maze won a World Cup giant slalom Saturday for her second victory this season.

She was followed by Canadians Genevieve Simard and Allison Forsyth while Julia Mancuso of the United States was fourth for the best result of her career.

Maze covered the two runs on the new Deborah Compagnoni course in a combined time of 2 minutes, 36.78 seconds.

Boxer Camacho released on bond in Mississippi

GULFPORT, Miss. — Three-time boxing champion Hector "Macho" Camacho was released from jail after a friend paid part of his bond.

Camacho was charged with burglary of a Gulfport computer shop.

Blotix police also charged him with drug possession after officers said they found him with 10 ecstasy pills in a hotel room when they arrested him Thursday.

The 24-year-old boxer was released Friday after being held on \$75,000 bail for the drug charge and \$50,000 for the burglary charge, police said. Bonding companies are required to collect 10 percent — in this case, \$12,500. A friend put up \$2,000 and Camacho will pay the rest, Randy Hilton of D&H Bail Bonds told The Associated Press on Saturday.

Camacho (78-5-2, 38 KOs) has been training on the Mississippi coast in Ocean Springs, Ala., in a bout with Chris Walsh (19-7-1, 7 KOs) in Gulfport.

Local scoreboard

Boys basketball

Division I
Ramstein 61, Würzburg 44
(Friday at Ramstein)
Würzburg 10 11 6 17-44
Top scorers: Würzburg: Scott Tauli 14, Justin Jennings 10, Anthony Womack 7; Ramstein: Allen Weaver 26, Whitney McCloud 24, Daniel Dixon 8, Marquinton Showers 8.
Networker: Tauli led rebounding with 8.

IV-Würzburg 39, Ramstein 30
Kaiserslautern 40, Ramstein 43
(Saturday at Kaiserslautern)
Ramstein 11 11 13 42-43
Kaiserslautern 23 10 19 30-40
Top scorers: Ramstein: Allen Weaver 14, Daniel Dixon 7, Kaiz Quintin Strander 15, Julian Smith 15.
Networker: Aaron Ellis led Kaiserslautern (44) with 13 rebounds; teammate Clinton Robinson grabbed 8 rebounds and had 6 assists.

IV-Kaiserslautern 39, Ramstein 27
Division II
Pat 61, Villingen, Germany
(Friday at Villingen, Germany)
Pat 10 12 10 25-61
Top scorers: Bitb: Nick Brown 25, Perry Hardy 14, Trey Wilson 11; Pat: Neal Griffin 32, George Simpson 20.
Networker: Brown snared 10 rebounds and Hardy 8 for Bitburg led Pat's rebounding with 8. Simpson posted 4 assists.

IV-Pat 48, Bitburg 41
Pat 61, Bitburg 61
(Saturday at Villingen, Germany)
Bitburg 10 11 13 21-61
Pat 11 12 20 63-61
Top scorers: Bitb: Nick Brown 22, Trey Wilson 14, Charles Whitley 13; Pat: Neal Griffin 31, Brandon Bingley 14.

Networker: Brown again led all rebounders this time with 22, but Bitburg still fell to 3-2 overall. Patch (3-2) got 6 rebounds from Teria Whitaker, 5 steals from Griffin and 5 assists from Gene Simpson.
IV-Bitburg 47, Patch 42

Nonconference
St. John's 101, SHAPE 54
(Saturday at Brussels)
SHAPE 24 24 14 24-54
St. John's 24 24 24 21-101

Top scorers: SHA: Vernon Fowler 16; St. John's: Benjamin Dupont 15, Serkan Atil 16, Laurent Karim 15, Edward Banargh 12.

Networker: SHA's leading five St. John's players in double figures, Davis received 11 rebounds with 14 rebounds and 11 assists. He also had 5 blocks and 5 steals. SHAPE is 3-2 overall going into a league double-header against Mannheim and Vilsack on Friday at Mannheim. The Spartans are scheduled for a nonconference game Saturday at Ramstein.

IV-St. John's 56, SHAPE 47
Sanger 57, Iceland
(Friday at Keltia, Iceland; score by quarters unavailable)

Top scorers: Club team Sanger: Unavailable; Ice: T.J. Short 17, Brent Bautista 14, Collin Golder 8.

Mennith Hill 53, Lakenheath JV 25
(Friday at Mennith Hill)
Lakenheath JV 9 4 8 4-25
Mennith Hill 11 14 17 11-53

Top scorers: Lakenheath: Stephen Wigle 10; Mennith Hill: Kevin Hensley 13, Le-shawn Adams 10.

Mennith Hill 41, Lakenheath JV 17
(Saturday at Mennith Hill)
Lakenheath JV 8 13 14 6-41
Mennith Hill 10 11 11 11-41

Top scorers: Lakenheath: Jaylan Quinn 15, Stephen Wigle 10; MK: Matt Bailey 14, Le-shawn Adams 10.

Networker: Mannheim improved to 2-0 for season.

Brussels 51, AFNORTH 34
(Friday at Brussels)
Brussels 12 6 15 24-51
AFNORTH 10 11 13 15-34

Top scorers: AFN: Emmanuel Rogers 15, Karim Preston 11; Brussels: Ronnie Luffin 15, Quinn Lewis 10, Brandon Pierce 10.

Networker: Ruffin collected 10 rebounds and Pierce 7 for Brussels, which got 3 steals and 7 assists from Quinn, Preston, who finished 3 shots, led AFNORTH with 9 rebounds; teammate Mike Wigley added 8.

AFNORTH 51, Brussels 50
(Saturday at Brunsom, Netherlands)
AFNORTH 12 11 13 25-50
Top scorers: AFN: Mike Mostowicz 24, Matt Aerts 11, Logan Quinn 5; AFN: Emmanuel Rogers 11, Jonathan Miller 10.

Networker: Miller grabbed 6 rebounds, handed out 3 assists and blocked 2 shots in comeback which upped AFNORTH's overall record to 3-2. Preston and Wigley each posted 5 rebounds. Brussels' Quinn got 18 rebounds from Jones, 6 and 3.

AFNORTH 51, Brussels 50
(Saturday at Giesen; score by quarters unavailable)

Top scorers: AFN: Jordan Ruper 19, Robert Gies 14, David Bradford 12; Brussels: Chris Kitterman 10; Gies: Clay Johnson 11, Cedric Williams 9, Chris Fellman 7.

Networker: Williams got 23, overall going into Wednesday night's nonconference game at Frankfurt International School. Giesen led 0-4 and both hosts Ans-bach on Friday and Sanger on Saturday.

IV-Giesen 48, Würzburg 40
Heidelberg 39, Barmberg 38
(Saturday at Würzburg)
Heidelberg 10 12 13 27-38
Barmberg 10 12 7 6-38

Top scorers: Heidelberg: Tyrone Kuylenstierna 20, T.C. Blanks 17, Chris Jones 15; Barmberg: Carlos Zapata 15, Jonathan Gholston 10.

Networker: Wesley had 5 steals and 7 rebounds in comeback, Barmberg led 0-4 and got 7 more rebounds from Jones and 6 from Le-shawn Adams.

Mannheim 61, Hohentfels 41
(Friday at Hohentfels)
Mannheim 10 12 11 18-61
Hohentfels 10 11 14 11-41

Top scorers: Mannheim: Desmond Brown 13,



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(Friday at Hohentfels)
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(Friday at Hohentfels)
Mannheim 10 12 11 18-61
Hohentfels 10 11 14 11-41

Top scorers: Mannheim: Desmond Brown 13,

Brussels 51, AFNORTH 32

(Friday at Brussels; score by quarters unavailable)

Halfline: Brussels 11, AFNORTH 6.
Top scorers: AFN: Traume Blankenship 9, Whitney Pieterse 5; Bruss: Clavis Bottesani 9, Caitlin Quinn 15.

Networker: Bottesani posted 9 rebounds and 4 steals for Brussels, which got 9 rebounds and 4 steals from Quinn. Blankenship registered 7 rebounds and 4 steals; Pieterse made 4 steals and collected 4 rebounds.

AFNORTH 38, Brussels 26
(Saturday in Brussels, Netherlands; score by quarters unavailable)

Top scorers: AFN: Traume Blankenship 9, Caitlin Quinn 15; Bruss: Clavis Bottesani 9, Whitney Pieterse 5; Ashley Lewis 5.

Networker: AFN's leading five got 9 rebounds and 11 steals from Blankenship, 5 steals and 3 rebounds from Pieterse, 5 steals from Quinn, 4 steals from Lewis and 4 steals from Black Forest Academy at Patch and a Saturday game at Brussels.

AFNORTH 38, Brussels 26
(Saturday in Brussels, Netherlands; score by quarters unavailable)

Top scorers: AFN: Traume Blankenship 9, Caitlin Quinn 15; Bruss: Clavis Bottesani 9, Whitney Pieterse 5; Ashley Lewis 5.

Networker: Quinn registered 9 rebounds and 5 steals for AFNORTH, which got 9 rebounds and 4 steals from Bottesani, 4 steals from Pieterse and 4 steals from Quinn. Next up are games at Mennith Hill on Friday and Sanger on Saturday.

Mannheim 50, Hohentfels 25
(Friday at Hohentfels)
Mannheim 9 28 25-50
Hohentfels 10 11 21-25

Top scorers: Mannheim: Kelsey Chavaria 14, Nyeche Green 17; Hoh: Lisa Mayhew 4, Ashley Gauss 6.

Networker: Gauss registered 15 rebounds and 5 steals for Hohentfels, which got 6 rebounds from Mayhew, 4 rebounds from Chavaria, 4 rebounds from Gauss and 4 rebounds from Mayhew.

Mannheim 50, Hohentfels 25
(Saturday at Hohentfels)
Mannheim 9 28 25-50
Hohentfels 10 11 21-25

Top scorers: Mannheim: Kelsey Chavaria 14, Nyeche Green 17; Hoh: Lisa Mayhew 4, Ashley Gauss 6.

Networker: Mannheim, which got 15 rebounds and 5 steals from Green and 14 rebounds and 15 steals from Knox, improved to 5-1 overall. It hosts SHAPE and Vilsack on Friday and Vilsack alone on Saturday. Hohentfels, which got 8 rebounds each from Mayhew and Gauss 6-5 and next plays at Barmberg on Friday and Saturday.

IV-Hohentfels 10, Mannheim 15 (16 minutes).

Heidelberg 33, Barmberg 26
(Saturday at Barmberg)
Heidelberg 9 13 13-33
Barmberg 10 11 15-26

Top scorers: Heidelberg: Gernie Mennith Hill 12, Barmberg: Uwe Schmidt 10.

Networker: Heidelberg picked up its first victory of the season for new coach Jon Raftery and improved its overall record to 1-1. It is scheduled to host international School of Brussels on Saturday.

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(Saturday in Brussels, Netherlands; score by quarters unavailable)

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Military basketball

Northern Region

Spokane 50, Baudier 31

Top scorers: Baudier: Darin Lawson 20, Keith Baudier 15, Kelly Bragg Bright 14, Edwin Beck 11, Robert Harris 11.

RAYMOND T. CONWAY/Stars and Stripes

Ramstein's Krispy Grosselin, front, looks to pass as Würzburg's Myaj Stewart defended during a DODOS high school basketball match Friday night in Ramstein, Germany. Ramstein defeated Würzburg 38-11.

Girls basketball

Division I

Kaiserslautern 50, Ramstein 46
(Saturday at Kaiserslautern)

Ramstein 8 4 13 21-46
Kaiserslautern 10 11 11 19-50

Top scorers: Ramstein: Krispy Grosselin 14, Corinne Lautner 13, Heather Steele 6, Kendra Lenoir 6; Kaiz: Kimberly Hoyer 19, Bianca Gerena-Perez 12, Anisha Ingram 11, Shondricka Harvey 6.

Networker: Anisha had 6 rebounds and 4 steals; Ingram 3 rebounds, 4 steals and 3 assists; and Gerena-Perez had 11 rebounds as Kaiserslautern improved to 4-0 overall. The Lady Raiders next play Saturday at Wiesbaden. Steele led 12 rebounds, and Kaylin Bannister blocked 4 shots for Ramstein (3-1 overall), which had 11 rebounds on Friday night and hosts SHAPE on Saturday.

Division II
Pat 33, Bilingen, Germany
(Friday at Bilingen, Germany)
Pat 10 11 11-33
Bilingen 10 11 11-33

Top scorers: Bilingen: Alex Bintlitz 8, Monica

Blintz 7, Eric Winters 6; Pat: Nicole Anderson 15, Heather Hall 8, Jennifer Connor 4, Kaylee Lallau 4.

Networker: Anderson led all rebounders with 8; teammate Meredith Beatty pulled down 8; Lallau had 7 rebounds.

Pat 42, Bilingen 21
(Saturday at Villingen, Germany)
Pat 10 11 11-42
Bilingen 10 11 11-21

Top scorers: Bitb: Danielle Mefford 10, Nichole Grier 8; Pat: Kaylee Lallau 10, Alexis McCroskey 10, Nicole Anderson 9.

Networker: Patch improved its overall record to 3-3. The Panthers benefited from 9 rebounds by Anderson, 8 by Beatty and 7 by Lallau. Bitburg fell to 3-2.

IV-Patch 26, Bitburg 2
Nonconference
Iceland 54, Sanger 17
(Friday at Keltia, Iceland; score by quarters unavailable)

Top scorers: Club team Sanger: Unavailable; Iceland: Tierra Lewis 15, Len Vergara 12.

Familiar refrain in Philly

After losing three straight NFC title games, it's Super Bowl or bust once again for Eagles

BY ROB MAADDI
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — New year, another playoff season, same theme for the Philadelphia Eagles: It's Super Bowl or bust.

The Eagles set a franchise record with 13 victories this season, won their fourth straight NFC East title and finished first in the conference for the third year in a row.

None of it matters if they don't reach the Super Bowl after losing the past three NFC championship games.

"You don't win the Super Bowl and no one really cares," quarterback Donovan McNabb said. "No one cares who finished second and probably a lot of people can't even remember who finished second in most of the Super Bowls. If you don't win the Super Bowl, it doesn't matter what you did during the year."

The Eagles will play their first playoff game against Seattle, St. Louis or Minnesota on Jan. 16. For some players, it'll be their first action in four weeks.

After a wide receiver Terrell Owens went down with an ankle injury that probably will keep him out the rest of the season, coach Andy Reid decided to rest several of his key starters in the final two regular-season games because the Eagles already had secured home-field advantage throughout the playoffs.

McNabb played one quarter, while running back Brian Westbrook and defensive end Jevon Kearse didn't play in the past two games.

Some critics questioned Reid's philosophy, saying the long layoff will hurt the Eagles. Other coaches, such as New England's Bill Belichick, used an opposite approach, playing the regulars in meaningless games.

"I have a lot of confidence in our guys and wouldn't have been able to do this without them," Reid said. "I've got some tremendous leaders in that locker room and guys that will be very focused in on what is at hand, coming up in the playoffs. I am looking forward to it and I think they are."

With mostly reserves playing the past two games, the Eagles were outscored 58-17 in losses to the Rams and Cincinnati. Only the 1967 Green Bay Packers and 1972 Washington Redskins went to the Super Bowl after losing the final two regular-season games. The Packers beat Oakland, while the Redskins lost to Miami.

"We'll be well-rested and we'll have all our bullets back, ready to go out there in the first game," cornerback Sheldon Brown said.

Owens' injury was a devastating blow to an offense that was nearly unstoppable in the first 12 games of the season. The Eagles averaged 28.3 points in the first dozen games, won nine of those by double-digit margins and five by at least 21 points.

Without Owens, Philadelphia's receiving corps — Todd Pinkston, Freddie Mitchell, Greg Lewis and Billy McMullen — is ordinary at best. But the Eagles still have McNabb and



AP

Despite being huge favorites and playing at home in the past two NFC championship games, the Eagles were throttled by Tampa Bay and Carolina.

Westbrook, a dangerous threat who had 1,515 yards rushing and receiving.

McNabb had the best season of his six-year career, throwing for 3,875 yards, 31 touchdowns and just eight interceptions to earn his fifth trip to the Pro Bowl. He's determined to get the Eagles to the Super Bowl.

"I love to rise to the challenge in big games," McNabb said. "I've played in many big games in my career so far and I think I've played well in those big games. I'm not putting the NFC championships all on my back. This is a team game. We lost. I take the blame most of the time, but I think everybody else should take the blame, as well."

If Reid's approach backfires, he could be the main target for any such blame.

Hasselbeck has learned from his great gaffe

The Associated Press

Matt Hasselbeck is reminded often about his comments before the overtime coin flip at

last season's playoffs. "If I hadn't done that, no one would

know who I was," he said as Seattle prepared for the playoff matchup with St. Louis.

It's hard to forget. Hasselbeck was jawing good-naturedly with Ryan Longwell and Ahman Green of the Packers when the referee's microphone clicked on. It caused Hasselbeck to bark, "We want the ball and we're going to score!"

Next came another dubious moment for Hasselbeck. His throw to Alex Hanner was intercepted by Al Harris and returned for a 52-yard TD, ending Seattle's season.

"I didn't dwell on it," Hasselbeck said. "People ask if it haunts me. It didn't. It was what it was, a play you'd like to have back. I watched it on film with (quarterbacks coach) Jim Zorn after the season was over, like I would do with any other game. We learned from it."

He's promised that neither event will happen again. He'll watch his mouth when the microphones are near him and said he learned from the game-ending mistake.

Preparing for Peyton

Never one to hold back, Broncos defensive coordinator Larry Coyer said Denver plans "to go raise mortal hell" with the Indianapolis offense on Sunday.

In an animated interview, Coyer acknowledged the huge challenge the Colts present, but said nobody on the Broncos was surrendering.

One of Coyer's comments came concerning Broncos rookie Roc Alexander, who has been forced into a nickel back role in the secondary and will have to cover one of Indianapolis' three 1,000-yard receivers.

"It's tough for everybody," Coyer said. "It's competitive. These are good players. But the thought process can't be that way. They are who they are. We are what we are. And we've got to go raise hell and see who wins. We're going to go raise mortal hell and we'll find out."

Coyer acknowledged his players weren't ready the last time they traveled to Indianapolis, a 41-10 loss in last season's playoffs.

He gave credit to the Colts' coaching staff and praised Peyton Manning.

"The quarterback is so adept at finding where the holes are, it makes you want to puke," he said.

Steelers have everything it takes to win it all

BY CHARLES BRICKER
South Florida Sun-Sentinel

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — I'm poring over the Pittsburgh Steelers season, game by game, looking for something substantive — anything — that would suggest they won't win Super Bowl XXXIX.

It's not there. There are glitches, like Willie Ponder's 91-yard return for a touchdown to open the Giants game on Dec. 18. That must have given coach Bill Cowher apoplexy. And Rudi Johnson of the Bengals nicked them for 149 rushing yards and Terry Glenn caught for 151 in the Dallas game.

But these are not vulnerabilities — not when you don't see lapses like these in other games.

When you examine the Steelers, week by week, from top to bottom, and look not just at what they've accomplished but the gen-

Commentary

eral psychology of the club, which allows it to stay at a high level in big games, it's difficult to find any major reasons they won't win it all.

Of course, weird things happen in playoff games. But there are only so many Music City Miracles out there. Injuries stall top-tier players, like the one to receiver Terrell Owens, which dooms the Eagles' chances.

The Steelers have their dings and bruises, but they don't have any key players, such as cornerback Ty Law of the Patriots, who have missed so many games it's going to take precious time to shed the rust.

They pass well, though selectively. They defend the run. They have excellent linebackers who not only blitz but drop efficiently into coverage.

They have an astonishingly composed rookie quarterback.

They have superb coaching with Cowher and the best defensive coordinator in football in Dick LeBeau.

They defeat the teams they're supposed to defeat, and they defeat the elite clubs as well. They're 3-0 against teams in the playoffs.

What they do best is run the ball, and they run it 39 times a game.

"There are certain stats in the NFL that are critical ones. Turnovers obviously being a critical one. But rushing attempts plus pass completions — the combination of those two things usually determine the better teams, and the teams that win the most," Patriots offensive coordinator Charlie Weiss said.

A year ago the Steelers ran only 43.7 percent of the time they had a 4-10 record. This year they've run

61.1 percent and are 15-1. They signed Duce Staley as an unrestricted free agent, and he battered defenses for 10 years in a game until he was hurt. In came Jerome Bettis, who has had six 100-yard games since then.

On Sunday, in a game that would not alter his protected home-field position in the playoffs, Cowher rested crucial starters, including Staley and Bettis, and sent in an undrafted rookie from North Carolina named Willie Parker.

Into one of the strongest run defenses, Parker produced 102 yards against Buffalo, which needed to win to make the playoffs.

Is Parker that good? Probably not. But give some credit to Pittsburgh's offensive linemen, none of whom has missed a start — left to right Marv Smith, Alan Faneola, Jeff Hartings, Oliver Ross and Keyrick Vincent.

The likelihood is that the Steelers will play their divisional game against San Diego and the New England in the AFC title game. They've not been beaten at Heinz Field and have given up only two touchdowns in their past four home games.

Certainly it's possible that the defense or offense could have an off day, though not both. The Giants got 30 points, but the Steelers scored 33. They managed only 13 points from the Dolphins but gave up just three.

They do what's required on the day and there's too much veteran leadership, especially along the offensive line, to believe they'll crack psychologically.

The Pittsburgh Steelers are going to win the Super Bowl.

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Scottenheimer earns AP award

BY BARRY WILNER
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Marty Scottenheimer's guidance of one of the great turnarounds in NFL history won him The Associated Press 2004 NFL Coach of the Year award.

Scottenheimer took the San Diego Chargers from tailender to division champion, from a 4-12

embarrassment to a 12-4 power that was to host the New York Jets in a playoff game Saturday.

Many of Scottenheimer's team have done that. He's coached division winners in Cleveland, where he was the head man from mid-June through 1988. And in Kansas City (1989-98). He even had an 8-8 record in his one season in Washington, and considering how odd decisions such as those have done for owner Daniel Snyder, that was impressive, too.

But his third season in San Diego has been charmed. And perhaps a bit lucky, because Scottenheimer was looking for a different quarterback and hoped to go with first-round draft pick Philip Rivers.

When Rivers held out for half of training camp, Scottenheimer stuck with Drew Brees. Brees wound up as Comeback Player of the Year and Scottenheimer became Coach of the Year for the first time.

His players say Scottenheimer's decision to form a players council and ease up in practices, as well as remodeling the locker room, made a big difference.

"I've seen it all year," said linebacker Donnie Edwards, who also played for Scottenheimer in Kansas City. "The way he's coached his coaches, we understand the players and let the players understand the coaches — so it's a two-way street now."

There are so many things that have changed. It's hard to get the best. "I'm really excited about him, because he came into the year with great enthusiasm and great energy and it transferred over right to us as players, and we've been able to translate that onto the field."

Diego won nine of its last 10 games — the loss was in overtime at AFC South champion Indianapolis — to run away with the

AFC West. Scottenheimer got superb performances from under-aided tight end Antonio Gates and star running back LaDainian Tomlinson, who both made the All-Pro team. Edwards was one of the league's best defenders, as was tackle Jamal Williams.

That made the 2004 season even more fulfilling for Scottenheimer.

"At the end of the day, there is more than just the personal enjoyment that you've experienced," he said. "It's as much, if not more so, in the fact that you can already will all these people that have worked together with you to achieve it."

Scottenheimer is the first San Diego coach to win the award. He was trailed by Pittsburgh's Bill Cowher (14½ votes), who led the Steelers to the league's best record, 15-1. Cowher won it in 1992.

Last year's winner, Bill Belichick of New England, got three votes. Atlanta's Jim Mora received two and Carolina's John Fox got one.

Ravens' Reed chosen as Defensive Player of Year

NEW YORK — Ed Reed wasn't just the best defensive player on the Baltimore Ravens — no small feat with Ray Lewis as a teammate — he was the best defender in the NFL this season.

The Ravens safety outplayed even his illustrious buddy and training partner in winning The Associated Press 2004 Defensive Player of the Year award. No one was more impressed than Lewis. "I've seen him since he was a two-year-old," said the Ravens' defensive coordinator. "He prepares like a coach. He loves to play. Period. He brings joy to work. He's tough and smart."

Reed showed just how tough, smart, resourceful and skilled he is by dominating games from the safety position. Usually, it's linebackers such as Lewis or cornerbacks who get lots of sacks or cornerbacks who shut down opponents



San Diego Chargers coach Marty Scottenheimer, who guided his team to a 12-4 record and a division title after a 4-12 record, was voted The Associated Press Coach of the Year.

who control games.

But Reed, in his third season out of the University of Miami — also Lewis' college — had a greater impact than any other defender.

He earned 20 votes from a national panel of writers and broadcasters who cover pro football, beating Steelers linebacker James Farrior, who had 16. He is the first safety to win the award in 20 years.

Gibbs hires new QBs coach

ASHBURN, Va. — Joe Gibbs began the offseason overhaul of the Washington Redskins' offense Friday, hiring West Coast offense veteran Bill Musgrave as quarterbacks coach.

"He brings in a lot of new ideas," Gibbs said. "We're looking for ideas there. It's a good time to bring in someone who gives you different ideas and brings different viewpoints."

Musgrave's hiring came at the end of four days of meetings in which the Redskins coaches clarified the roster from top to bottom to plot a strategy for free agency. They also talked with several players, including left tackle Chris Samuels, whose contracts need to be renegotiated to clear room under the salary cap.

Haslett will return for sixth year with Saints

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Jim Haslett has been told by New Orleans Saints owner Tom Benson that he will return for a sixth season as coach.

Haslett's five-year record of 42-38 is the second best in team history behind Jim Mora's 93-78 mark. The Saints, however, have missed the playoffs four straight years. This season, New Orleans started 4-8 but won its final four games to finish 8-8.

"There's been a lot of speculation about the coach the whole year, and we wanted to get that behind us as quickly as possible," general manager Mickey Loomis said. "We're strongly behind

Jim. He's our coach. We strongly believe that he is going to lead this team to a championship."

Haslett declined comment Saturday.

Loomis said Benson met with Haslett on Friday in West Palm Beach, Fla., where the owner has been on vacation. Loomis also met with Haslett during the week.

"Jim and I met several times during the week to talk about things we need to improve on and set the tone for the next year," Loomis said. "Jim had to get some feelings on the table and we had to get that behind us."

Haslett has two years remaining on a five-year contract that pays him an average of \$3 million a season.

Astros await word on Beltran; Indians, Millwood reach deal

RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Houston Astros will find out shortly whether they'll keep Carlos Beltran.

Competing against the New York Mets and perhaps other teams, the Astros faced a Saturday midnight EST deadline to re-sign the speedy center fielder who helped Houston come within a win of its first World Series appearance.

Beltran, 27, has been seeking a contract in excess of \$10 million. Astros owner Drayton McLane spoke with Beltran's agent, Scott Boras, on Saturday morning.

"There's been no new developments," Astros spokesman Jimmy Stanton said. "There's nothing new to report... It'll be a long day."

After Saturday, the Astros would be unable to sign Beltran until May 1.

Also Friday, the Los Angeles Dodgers closed in on a contract with Red Sox postseason hero Derek Lowe worth about \$36 million over four years and finalized their \$24 million, three-year deal to keep left-hander Odalis Perez.

"I can't comment yet — saying they said saying no," Lowe said from his home in Fort Myers, Fla., when asked about a possible future with the Dodgers.

Los Angeles was holding off finalizing a contract with Lowe, wanting first to complete a deal with pitcher Shawn Green to Arizona, a lawyer involved in those talks said on condition of anonymity.

Green, who is due to earn \$16 million this season, did not reach an agreement with the Diamondbacks on a contract extension before Thursday's deadline, but Arizona and the Dodgers requested a new window Friday night. Green was expected to be traded or given until Monday to agree to an extension that would allow the teams to finalize a revised trade.

"It's a slightly different deal," Diamondbacks general partner Ken Kendrick said. "We hope we are able to come to terms with Shawn. We were relatively close on certain things and never really had a chance to get to other things."

Dodgers General Manager Paul DePodesta confirmed the matter went to the commissioner's office, but he would not elaborate.

Lowe was 14-12 with a 5.42 ERA in 33 starts for Boston last season. But he was 3-0 with a 1.18 ERA in four games during the postseason, three of them starts. He was the winner in the final game of all three postseason series — against the Angels, Yankees and Cardinals — as the Red Sox won their first World Series in 86 years.

About the possibility of pitch-

ing for the Dodgers, Lowe said: "They won their division last year. Any time you can go to a team that has won, or has a chance to win, it definitely would be a good situation."

Lowe said he was disappointed the Red Sox never had an offer to return, but added: "I knew it was heading down that path late in the season. You realize that it's a business. It was definitely an enjoyable place to play. I have nothing but good thoughts and positive things to say about playing there."

Kevin Millwood, who like Beltran and Lowe is represented by Boras, finalized a \$7 million, one-year contract with the Cleveland Guardians on Saturday.

Millwood is guaranteed \$3 million in salary. He also gets a \$4 million signing bonus, but that money is contingent on his not spending more than 20 days on the disabled list for a shoulder or elbow injury sustained while pitching — not fielding or batting.

Millwood also can earn an additional \$1 million in performance bonuses, but that will amount if he makes 34 starts or pitches 215 innings.

If Millwood spends 21 or more days on the DL for an injury to his shoulder or elbow sustained while pitching, he would lose 1/183rd of the signing bonus for each day on the DL, including the first 20. That reduction calculates to \$21,857 per day.

"Kevin is a proven, front-line rotation veteran starting pitcher who has considerable experience in the playoff environment," Indians General Manager Mark Shapiro said. "That experience will serve as an invaluable resource to our young pitchers."

While waiting for Beltran's decision, the Mets reached a preliminary agreement on a one-year contract with infielder Miguel Cairo, \$500,000.

Left-hander Chris Hammond and the San Diego Padres agreed to a \$750,000, one-year contract that is contingent on the reliever's passing a physical next week. Gabe White, another left-handed reliever, agreed to a \$600,000, one-year contract with the Atlanta Braves.

Designated hitter Ruben Sierra is staying with the Yankees, agreeing Saturday to a \$4.5 million, one-year contract. Also facing the Saturday deadline to re-sign were pitcher Pedro Astacio and first baseman Dave McCarty (Boston), catcher Brent Mayne (Los Angeles), and outfielder Doug Glavine (Philadelphia). All but Glavine were considering re-signing.

Among players eligible for salary arbitration, Detroit first baseman Carlos Pena agreed to a one-year contract worth \$2,575,000.

There are 103 players who remain eligible to file by Jan. 14.

SPORTS



Patch boys, girls defeat Bitburg
as prep sports return after
holiday break, Pages 39, 40

Denver's slow-down tactics

Broncos eager
to make amends
against Colts'
prolific offense

BY LEE RASIZER
Rocky Mountain News

All the pleasantries had just been handed out and Larry Coyer was more than given the Indianapolis Colts their due Wednesday.

Peyton Manning: greatest player in the game today.

The coaching staff that guides him: brilliant.

The receivers who catch Manning's passes: best in football as a group.

But as the Denver Broncos defensive coordinator kept talking to reporters flanking him, his face began to redden.

The intensity level began rising. And about six questions in, the usually serene Coyer erupted.

Enough about what the Colts' top-ranked offense is capable of doing. Instead, he wanted to chat about Denver having what it takes to slow them down in the teams' wild-card playoff matchup Sunday at the RCA Dome.

"They are what they are. They're very good. And we are what we are," Coyer said. "Now we have to go raise hell and see who wins. And we're going to raise mortal hell, OK? And we'll find out. That's all I know to say. ... All the other stuff is [expletive] and I won't listen to it. We'll see. Let's wait until the game, then make our comments."

The only statement the Broncos defense made in its playoff meeting at Indianapolis in January 2004 was that it wasn't ready for raising anything but the Colts' points total.

Manning completed 12 passes for 10 or more yards, including touchdowns of 31, 46, 23 and 87 yards. Receivers Marvin Harrison and Brandon Stokley each had 100-yard performances for the first time in playoff history. And that occurred in the first half.



Denver Broncos at Colts

7 p.m. Sunday:
AFN-Atlantic, Pacific
and AFN-Radio

Game time is Central European.



Broncos safety John Lynch (47) lowers the boom on Colts tight end Dallas Clark during Sunday's game in Denver. Lynch, who was fined \$75,000 by the NFL for the helmet-to-helmet hit, was added to the Broncos secondary, along with Champ Bailey, after Denver was torched 41-10 in the playoffs last year in Indianapolis.

The Broncos (10-6) vow there won't be a repeat this time.

"I promise you one thing," Broncos defensive tackle Ellis Johnson said. "We will show up in Indianapolis to play on Sunday."

Once they arrive, how do they figure to handle the league's No. 2 offense?

There are a few ways the Broncos will enhance their chances:

■ Turn up the intensity: After Denver's playoff loss, Coyer was incredulous that the defense could be so flat emotionally.

"A whole bunch of this game is intensity," he said Wednesday. "This is the real deal. You're one-and-done and that's the way it is until it's over. And if you ain't ready to put it all out there, we're in trouble."



Against Denver in last year's playoffs, Peyton Manning completed 22 of 26 passes for 377 yards, five TDs and no interceptions.

■ Don't fall into the hype: The Colts average 32.6 points, boast three 1,000-yard receivers and the league's likely Most Valuable Player in Manning, so they already have gotten Denver's attention.

"To look at it on paper, it's kind of like, 'Man that can't be right,'" Johnson said.

Still, it doesn't mean Indianapolis is unbeatable.

"It's just a matter of slowing them down to a point," Johnson said.

The comments the Broncos are hearing this week, that they have little chance of doing just that, are familiar to safety John Lynch.

At Tampa Bay, he played against the St. Louis Rams' high-powered "Greatest Show on

SEE SLOW-DOWN ON PAGE 42



Forecast at
Lambeau Field
calls for another
bitterly close call
between rivals

Page 42



Productive Okafor
the centerpiece
of Bobcats'
inaugural season

Page 35



World No. 1 Singh
parlays scalding
start into two-shot
lead in Hawaii

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Schottenheimer selected NFL coach of the year Page 43



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